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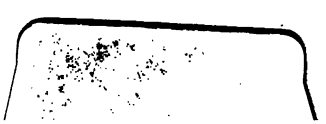
My Class for Jesus.



MY CLASS FOR JESUS:

RECORDS OF LABOUR AND SUCCESS

IN

SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHING.

BY

LILLIE MONTFORT.

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION, BY

REV. JOHN SMITH SPENCER.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The rapid sale of the first edition has amply demonstrated the correctness of my convictions concerning the probable effect of publishing these records of a living teacher's toils, discouragements, and success. Numerous testimonies of the benefits resulting to individuals and schools from the perusal of this book, have been received both by "Lillie Montfort" and myself; and while thankfully acknowledging the kindness of those many friends who have interested themselves in its diffusion, we must record our profound gratitude to Him who prospers the feeblest efforts for His glory.

It seems necessary for me again to state that the entire responsibility of this publication is mine. "Lillie" is the very last person who would have thought of putting such an account of her labours before the world. The original came to me in the form of private contributions to my store of Sunday-school information. Some parts of this book were extracted from letters received by me twelve years since, and those portions which form a continuous narrative

were sent to me for personal use about five years ago. I mention these things to protect my dear friend from the slightest suspicion of having herself designed to make known her life-long work. I might have written the account in the third person, and thus have shielded her from any appearance of a personal recital. But this, I was sure, would greatly diminish the interest. Most readers prefer to have individual experiences narrated by the one in whose history they transpired. Knowing this, I resolved to maintain the original style, and while preparing the manuscript for the press, endeavoured throughout to preserve my friend's identity. Had "Lillie" written for the public, possibly this book would have assumed a different form. It would, very probably, have appeared more perfect as a literary production, but it might have lost some of the freedom and freshness characterising an autobiography intended only for the use of a private friend. Yet for all this "Lillie Montfort" is, in every respect, the author of "My Class for Jesus." The story is her own, and told in her own way. I have simply done for it that which was necessary to put it into book form.

It ought, perhaps, to be said that some of the sketches have been written since "Lillie" consented to have her work made known. This especially applies to two, which now appear for the first time. For reasons which need not be

named, we have decided to omit chapter eleven of the first edition, entitled "The Pet of the Class," and have substituted for it "Found of Jesus." Chapter sixteen, "Perplexed, but not in despair," is also entirely new, and will prove, I think, a valuable addition.

My friendship for "Lillie," or rather her friendship for me, is a possession gratefully inherited from my parents. Her name has been familiar to me almost as long as I can remember. The impression made upon my youthful mind by her cheerful piety is among the brightest memories of my early religious life. While a Sunday-school teacher I was always stimulated by her kind and encouraging letters; and since I entered on the work of the Christian ministry, I have often received from her mental and spiritual invigoration. And now, while seeking by this publication to benefit our Sunday-schools, my hope is also to minister some comfort and gladness to the life of one who, amid much affliction and care, has for many years toiled for the welfare of others.

JONN SMITH SPENCER.

HOLBECK, LEEDS,
January, 1873.

INTRODUCTION.

It is possible that some readers may wonder how the following autobiography came into the editor's possession, and why he has thus made it public.

From various circumstances my interest in Sunday-schools began very early. After a while my attention was specially turned to their constitution and working. About four years ago I spent all the time I could spare during several months in preparing materials on the entire subject, thinking to venture on a publication. In the search for original illustrations, I wrote to the one whose life-work is herein partially described, and requested from her some account of the character and results of that work. In compliance with my request, my friend sent me a sketch of her career as a Sunday-school teacher; but when I read it I became convinced that such a history should stand by itself, and not be used merely to illustrate another production.

It was long before I could obtain permission to prepare these records for the press, but at last my friend, though reluctantly, gave her consent,

examined again her numerous letters and memoranda, sent me several additional sketches and incidents, and finally committed the whole to my care, to be employed as I thought best.

My work has been a very interesting one. As editor I have arranged and rewritten the whole. Every time I have turned to it, I have become afresh convinced that such a narrative ought to be made known, and that when known would accomplish much and abiding good.

I am not aware that anything like it has hitherto been published. A biography, even of one who had been similarly employed, could never have such a distinctive character: here there is one thing only, the work done by a Sunday-school teacher. Of course, Wesleyan Methodism may be met with in almost every part of this little book, but that arises from the simple fact that the teacher whose experience it records has been a Wesleyan Methodist during the greater part of her life. For myself, I am profoundly thankful that the Church to which I belong has possessed such a devoted Sunday-school teacher. At the same time I may venture to express the belief that these records would be of use to Sunday-school workers in every section of the Church of Christ.

For some reasons I should like to have told the reader who this teacher is, but she has no *desire to be* known. However, I am permitted

to say that the "Lillie" whose signature is appended to the "School Sketches" in the *Wesleyan Methodist Sunday-school Magazine*, is the same as the "Lillie" appearing on the title-page.

It will be seen that her life has not been one of freedom from care and suffering. Her work has been done amid much and varied affliction, and her successes have been won through hard struggles with manifold difficulties. Her entire course forms a proof and example of what may be achieved by devoted piety and unwearying toil.

It may be of some advantage to enumerate those parts of the Sunday-school teacher's work which I had originally intended these sketches to illustrate, and thus incidentally indicate the methods our teacher has pursued, and which have so largely contributed to her success.

1. *Piety must be the foundation of real success.*

As teachers, merely, it is possible to be very efficient without personal religion. It may not need the grace of God in the soul to teach the geography and history of the Bible, or to keep order in the class and school. But the great end of Sabbath-school teaching, the conversion of the scholars, can never be attained while the teacher is ignorant of experimental godliness. There must be, first of all, individual consecration to God, and then the constant endeavour to bring the scholars to Christ. It was not until after our

teacher became converted that her real success began.

But piety will not accomplish everything. There are many pious persons who are signally inefficient and unsuccessful as teachers. All other qualifications have frequently been ignored, and conversion been regarded as constituting all necessary or possible fitness. No greater mistake could be made. No one can be a true and successful "preacher of righteousness" without personal religion; but many more things are necessary to make the preacher a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed." Gifts, training, and incessant toil must be added to grace. What is true of one who preaches to the larger congregation in the sanctuary, is equally true, though on a more limited scale, of one who teaches the smaller congregation in the school.

Every teacher should be "apt to teach," or, at the least, should have a thorough love for the work of teaching. Let there be this love for the work, and a fair amount of efficiency will sure to be acquired. In such a case every effort will be put forth to overcome ignorance and inability, and no trouble be thought too great in the performance of the loved employment.

It is not within my province in this introduction to point out all the requisites for successful Sunday-school teaching; and therefore, taking *those only* which are illustrated by this history,

I may place second on the list a qualification which is very extensively disregarded.

2. *Every one who desires to be efficient and successful should be* (except in rare cases) AN ALL DAY AND EVERY SUNDAY TEACHER.

It will be seen that our teacher adopted this plan at the beginning, and continued it until she had a class of young women who were themselves unable to get out in the morning. Of course, there may be instances in which valuable teachers can come to the school only on alternate Sabbaths, or only once a day. But the *alternate system*, as pursued in many schools, is a source of great and continued weakness. There are some schools which would lead us to suppose that they exist solely for the purpose of crowding into them as many teachers as possible. The welfare of the scholars is almost if not entirely forgotten, and the highest success aimed at is the having a large number of so-called teachers. In the best cases of alternate teaching, the teachers will feel but little individual responsibility, and will not possess anything like the power over their scholars which they would attain by constant attendance.

Many excuses are made in defence of the plan of appointing two or more superintendents to a school, and two or more teachers to a class; but after a careful examination of both sides of the

question, my calm conviction is that we shall never see the results we have a right to expect from Sabbath-school operations until the majority of superintendents and teachers are so earnestly consecrated to their work as to be in their places twice every Sabbath-day.

3. *Special preparation for every Sunday's work* is another essential for ensuring success.

To pursue a course of lessons is the easiest method for the teacher, and the most interesting to the scholars. One week's lesson will easily and naturally arise out of that preceding it. There will be none of the uneasiness and anxiety associated with looking out for some isolated lesson, nor any need to drive the mind to master one entirely uncongenial to it. By such consecutive teaching the attention, and, what is of greatest value, *the co-operation* of the class will be secured.

Let preparation for the Sabbath's work be begun early in the week, and it will become not only easy but delightful. Every available source should be made to contribute exposition, illustration, or application, and then the teacher would never have to look hastily for some book of "stories" to fill up the time, but would always enter upon the duties of the day feeling the time too short to utter all the truths of which the mind and heart were full.

4. The efforts of the Sabbath should be supplemented to the utmost of opportunity by efforts during the week.

How frequently the teacher and the taught are completely severed from Sunday to Sunday! It is true that in large towns they may never come into contact with each other during the week, but even then it would be possible to meet by previous arrangement. Occasionally the teacher lacks the disposition to recognise the scholar anywhere but in the school; but we may hope that the absence of any intercourse between the Sabbaths arises from the fact that the teacher has never thought of its value and necessity.

The following records will show that our teacher pursued various courses to supplement the labours of the Sabbath. She watched constantly for new scholars, especially when in charge of an adult class. She cultivated the acquaintance and friendship of her scholars, and met them for instruction and conversation on a week-night as well as on the Sunday.

Much more of this kind of work might be done. Scores and hundreds of boys and girls, and young men and women, are found wandering the streets and roads, who might probably be induced to attend the Sabbath-school, if affectionately invited by the one who would be their constant teacher. Then there are not many who could not at least occasionally meet the scholars on

some week-evening, either for friendly conversation or definite instruction; and this would do more than even the Sunday labours towards bringing the teacher and the taught into close relationship.

5. Let me mention one thing more. *When scholars leave the school they should not be forgotten.* Once separated from the school, how many go, uncared for, into paths leading to ruin! Few, very few, compared with the number who pass through the schools, find their way into the church. Having left the school, they are lost to us and lost for ever! In multitudes of instances this is because there are no adult classes or adult schools; and where such provision is made the loss is greatly owing to the absence of any effort for the salvation of the young men and women after they have left the school.

There need not be much alarm at the amount of work which such a course apparently involves. If all teachers (having sole charge of the class) did their best in following up their scholars, it would soon be seen that the difficulties could be overcome with comparative ease, and the results would furnish ample encouragement and reward.

A perusal of the following pages will show what can be, and what has been, done. In this case, when scholars were leaving, special prayer was made on their behalf in and by the class.

Of course this could only be done in a separate room. Unfortunately there is but little provision made in this way in comparison with what should be. The time may come when those who build sanctuaries and Sabbath-schools will pay as much attention to the claims of the latter as the former. Till that time comes we shall continue to suffer incalculable loss.

Moreover, our teacher sought to keep up a connection and correspondence with her scholars after they had gone. The sketches herein given will furnish some idea of the number of letters written and received. The labour entailed was something considerable, and was ever increasing, but the results compensated for the toil.

Are there not others who could pursue this or a similar plan? Surely anything, everything, should be tried rather than permit the scholars who leave us to be neglected, forgotten, uncared for. Much more is needed than what is now done to connect the school with the church; but while many things essential to effect this union can only be undertaken by the church collectively, some things, such as those just enumerated, may be accomplished by individual teachers.

It is not needful that I should write more. The responsibility of this publication must be mine. It was not "Lillie Montfort's" wish that

to appear before the public. But so strong is my conviction that this history will be stimulating and encouraging to many interested in Sabbath-schools, that I could not rest without striving to put it within their reach.

The sole aim of the whole is to contribute to the increased efficiency and success of our Sunday-schools, and my earnest prayer is, that this little book may be instrumental in inciting many to hard, earnest, and continued labour in this part of the vineyard of the Lord.

J. SMITH SPENCER.

1872.

MY CLASS FOR JESUS.

MY CLASS FOR JESUS.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST WORK AND CONVERSION.

Before I was fifteen years of age I was led to offer myself as a Sabbath-school teacher in a small school connected with a village Congregational chapel. I scarcely understood why I did so, for I was at that time totally unconcerned about spiritual things, and only looked on my Bible as a Sunday book. The veil was upon my heart, and I saw none of the beauties of religion which I have since discovered.

How was it then that I became a teacher? Perhaps I may answer, first, I was particularly fond of children; secondly, I had a special partiality for teaching, and considered myself "apt to teach;" and thirdly (and it may be, chiefly), an invitation was given by the minister to "some intelligent young people in the congregation to come forward as teachers in the school, there being an urgent need for more labourers in

the vineyard." The appeal thus made was an earnest one, and begat in my mind some sort of desire to work for the Lord, which I construed into a desire to become a Christian. Accordingly, I determined to alter my course of life, and to unite myself to the people of God.

After the services of that Sabbath-day, I was revolving these thoughts in my mind, when some of my young companions alluded to the request made for teachers, telling me that when Mr. P. said "intelligent young people," he looked at me, and they were quite sure the address was given on my account, &c., &c. Although I laughed at what my friends said, yet their ideas had some influence over me, and confirmed me in my intentions. Without telling any one of my purpose, the next Sabbath I walked into the little schoolroom at the back of the chapel, and trembling at my own temerity, sank into the nearest seat.

The superintendent came forward, and gave me a hearty welcome, saying, "I suppose you have come as a teacher?"

"If I am of any use," I replied.

"Oh yes," he said, quickly, and taking me by the hand, he led me to a class, and put me in charge thereof, remarking, "We have had our eyes on you for this class."

I did not raise my eyes, but took the seat, and we commenced the morning hymn. During the prayer (in which I took no interest) I shyly

glanced at my class, and found I had ten great girls to teach. This frightened me, and I determined to expostulate with the superintendent. As soon as I had opportunity, I ventured to say to him, "I expected a class of little ones," but he assured me that "there was no one so qualified to take the elder girls; indeed, he had not a teacher to whom he could give the class, and generally had to take it himself."

My vanity was flattered, and I remember looking round the room, and thinking, "Well, I know more than any of the others." But I knew nothing then of the constraining power of the love of Christ. The "sweet story of old" had never affected me, and I was altogether unfit for the work which I had undertaken.

How strangely I felt. I shook hands with all the girls; asked their names, residences, &c., and expressed a hope that we should become friends, and get on happily. I found that I had certain questions to ask, and answers to hear recited, from the "Assembly's Shorter Catechism." Some of them struck me as very difficult; and as I could never be satisfied with correct words, without being assured that their meaning was understood, I spent a considerable time in explanation. The consequence was, that the signal for closing the school was given before we had opened our Bibles. The superintendent told me, "We only allow half an hour for

lessons." "Well," thought I, "this will never do, I must alter the plan."

In the afternoon I had fourteen girls, and four of them had catechism to repeat. I then proposed that we should begin the book again, so that every girl should have the same lesson; thus, by taking only one or two of the answers each week, I could get through more easily. I next suggested that we should begin the New Testament, and proceed with it regularly. All seemed pleased, and we went on famously. At the close of the school, my scholars got round me, asking, "Will you always come?" and adding, "We never had such a nice teacher;" "If you will come in the morning I shall too;" with many similar remarks. I went home flushed and excited, and exceedingly self-complacent. If ever I was disposed to utter language like that of the Pharisee in the Temple, it was then.

Time rolled on. I was, said many, a successful Sunday-school teacher, and I believed them. My class was regular in attendance, orderly in their behaviour, perfect in their lessons, and warmly attached to their teacher. Never had I to mourn over careless absentees. I thought nothing of walking long country miles to visit my scholars in their own homes, and if any were sick, I was sure to be at their bedside. I was satisfied, *Satisfied!* and yet no soul was won for Jesus! *No poor sinner* was found asking the way to

Calvary! No one of all the number manifested any fear of going from the Sunday-school down to perdition! Up to this time I "prophesied smooth things;" but a change was at hand.

I had carried out my plan of going regularly through the New Testament, and in due time we reached the third chapter of St. John's Gospel. We read it, and I began to question and explain. I showed them that Nicodemus was a well-read man—a man of good position—yet not sufficiently independent—was afraid of losing caste, &c., &c.; and I pointed out how frequently the fear of man prevented us from being right or doing right. On this subject I spoke freely and easily; but as my eye fell on the next verse, I felt a strange repugnance to say anything about it. That verse was read. Then followed the questions which Christ's words elicited from Nicodemus, and as the girl who read the verse containing them finished it, she naïvely added, "And that is what I want to know, teacher."

Here I was then compelled to take up the subject, and I expect I made a strange muddle of it. I was not satisfied, and fancying the girls were not, I asked, "Do you understand me?"

"I have not got at it," said the one who spoke before. At the same time a hand was slipped into mine, and a soft timid voice said, "I do, teacher, *but I never understood it till I felt it.*"

The speaker was a gentle, delicate-looking girl,

who had been under my care only a few weeks. She was staying in the country for the benefit of her health, and her cousin had brought her with him to the Sunday-school; and though younger than the rest of my scholars, she had temporarily joined our class.

"What did J. S. say?" asked several of the girls. When I told them they expressed great surprise. For the next few minutes our little visitor became our teacher. I was sufficiently careful to keep my own counsel. I felt I had not the experience of the New Birth which J. S. had; but also a consciousness that I ought to possess it, accompanied by an anxiety that my class should think I did.

Very glad was I when the signal was given to put away our books. I walked towards home with J. S., and found she belonged to a Wesleyan Sunday-school in London. In course of conversation she told me that her father, mother, and teacher, had often begged her to give her heart to God, and that she tried to do so, but for some time in vain. At length, while the Rev. Mr. Beal was addressing the school on the promise, "They that seek me early shall find me," she was so deeply affected that she stayed behind with a few more elder scholars, on purpose to seek the Saviour. She then obtained the pardon of her sins, and went home a changed girl. Such was her simple story.

From this Sunday I longed for the conversion of souls. I thought I could not rest without seeing my scholars brought to Jesus. I began to pray for them, but withal still covered myself with the rags of my own righteousness, and in fancied security went on my way.

A few weeks more, and J. S. informed me that she was "going home before another Sunday." How unfeignedly sorry I was to part with her! I could not keep back the tears.

"Dear Miss ——," said the child, "I am sorry to go, but my mother has come for me."

When coming out of the chapel after the morning service, I found J. S. was waiting for me, to introduce me to her mother, who was such a woman as at that time I had never seen, one whom we should now designate "a plain old-fashioned Methodist."

She spoke very kindly to me, blessed God who had inclined me while I was so young to labour for Jesus, thanked me for my care of her little girl, adding, "she often named you in her letters, and we have prayed for you at the family altar."

I did not like to say "Good-bye," so promised to call at the house where they were visiting. I did so; and there heard so much about the Wesleyan Methodists, that I determined to go to a little preaching room in my native village, and hear for myself. Mrs. S. rejoiced at my decision.

In parting from them I gave the child a small text-book, entitled, "Small rain on the tender herb;" and I may add here some reference to my young friend's after-history. She has been married several years, and is now the mother of a large family. In the midst of many trials she continues to adorn her Christian profession, and ever rejoices that she early sought the Lord. When last I saw her she showed me her little book, which she had most carefully preserved, and which, she assured me, was one of her most valued treasures. Over that little book we mingled our tears of joy, for the Lord had done great things for us since that episode in the history of our lives.

One Sabbath evening, in the small preaching room which I have just mentioned, a sermon was preached from, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live." (2 Kings xx. 1.) While listening, my convictions were deepened. I saw myself as a lost sinner, "without God and without hope in the world." But I said nothing, I made no sign, and carried away with me a deeply burdened conscience.

Many days and nights I went mourning in the disquietude of my soul, but still held my peace, except that in my morning and evening prayers I tried to

> "Groan the sinner's only plea,
> God be merciful to me."

For some six months this unhappy state of mind continued, until entering one evening the village preaching room, I rejoiced to see again the same preacher whose sermon had so moved me. This time his text was, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) My mind was enlightened, my understanding opened, and I saw the way of salvation through faith in Christ. I was convinced there was no hindrance to a present salvation except in my own unbelief; and as the little company sang—

> "For you the purple current flowed
> In pardons from His wounded side;
> Languished for you the Eternal God;
> For you the Prince of glory died;
> Believe, and all your sin 's forgiven,
> Only believe, and yours is heaven!"—

I then laid hold on Jesus, and felt a sweet peace pervade my soul.

I thought my emotions were unnoticed, but at the close of the service the preacher spoke to me personally, and invited me to attend a "class meeting," held in an adjoining village every Sunday afternoon. This I could not do, as it would have prevented my attendance at the Sunday-school; but a way was opened in due time, and I united myself with a little band meeting on Tuesday evenings at C——. I had a most pious and affectionate leader, and ought to have made more rapid progress in the Divine

life. I believe I tried to live for Christ, but I certainly did not honour Him by any confession of His power to save. Constitutionally nervous and timid, I could not overcome my objection to give my experience in the class-meeting, and consequently lost much advice that might have profited me. I mourn even now at the remembrance of those evenings, and have often wished I could have that time over again. It may well be imagined that when trouble came, and difficulties arose, and there was need to take a decided stand for the right, I was one of those who drew back, listening to the plea of the Tempter, that *possession without profession was better than profession without possession.*

But, I bless God, the temptation was but for a season. One quarter only did I remain out of connection with the Society, and then I heard a sermon which led me to determine once more to cast in my lot with the people of God. To the subsequent conversations and letters of the preacher of that sermon I owed much, and also to the kind persuasions and entreaties of his beloved wife. I went back to my old leader, and I think from that time I continued "steadfast, unmovable."

It was long before I enjoyed settled peace, for the Tempter always had this snare for my soul, "You can never speak in class." But at length *the time* of victory came. My heart being "full

of Christ," the snare was broken. I declared His loving-kindness to me, and rejoiced that "the blood which makes the foulest clean" was that which "availed for me." In short—

> "I fell on the atoning Lamb,
> And I was saved by grace."

"Hitherto the Lord hath helped me." I have proved the faithfulness of a covenant God, I have experienced the sufficiency of grace for every time of need. In all times of sickness and sorrow Christ has been "precious" to me, and I fear nothing for the future. With the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and the declaration, "He giveth more grace," what have I to fear? Jesus is mine! And—

> "Fixed on this ground will I remain,
> Though my heart fail and flesh decay;
> This anchor shall my soul sustain,
> When earth's foundations melt away;
> Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
> Loved with an everlasting love."

In consequence of my becoming a member of the Methodist Society, and from various other causes, my connection with the school in which I began my career as a teacher now ceased. Very painful was the parting with my class; but I had been requested to labour in the Wesleyan Sunday-school at C——, and I felt it my duty to comply.

My three years' experience had been of some service to me, and I had arrived at some important conclusions.

First, I had learnt that mental ability alone, even if accompanied by teaching tact, is not sufficient to make a good Sunday-school teacher.

Secondly, That holiness of heart and a consistent life were the great qualifications for usefulness, and constitute the grand secret of success.

Thirdly, That though a kind smile and affectionate words will do much, by securing the love of the pupils, they will never bring them to the Saviour, unless they be inspired by the *constraining love* of Him who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me."

And *fourthly*, I learnt that with the Bible in my hand I had all I needed—narrative, precept, doctrine, illustration—and I resolved henceforth to be a TEACHER OF ONE BOOK, "mighty in the Scriptures."

CHAPTER II.

TEACHING THE LITTLE ONES.

I COMMENCED my career as a Sunday-school teacher at C—— with very different feelings from those with which I entered the school at L——. Instead of looking round and imagining that no one was superior to myself, I felt I was "less than the least," and tremblingly accepted the lowest class.

To hear little children the alphabet had no attractions for me, but I remembered that I was to "do it unto the Lord, and not unto men." When the Tempter taunted me with the thought that I walked two miles every Sunday just to teach a few children A B C, I was able to answer him, "*I am doing it for Jesus*," and that seemed to make the work honourable and noble. "FOR JESUS!" That thought hushed every murmur, dispelled all pride, and led me to acknowledge that I was unworthy to be allowed to do anything, however trifling, that would help forward the work of the Lord. But let me not be misunderstood. If I did not think so then, I

have since learnt *that nothing done for Christ can be a trifling work.*

I well remember our aged superintendent coming to me, and sitting by my side in the class, asking me many questions about myself and my Christian experience, and begging me to lay myself out for usefulness. When I left the school that day, I resolved, in the strength of grace, that my chief energies should be used there,—that my time, talents, strength, should be spent there; and I ventured to hope that at some distant day I might be the instrument of leading a soul to God.

For some months I continued caring for these very little ones. Young as they were, they learned to love me, and well did I love them. But after a while I had to take a higher class.

Here I found I was associated with another teacher, and one much older than myself. Because of her seniority, or for some other reason, she constantly interfered with my plans and stopped my lessons, until my old feelings returned, and I found it hard to continue my work. That she was a Christian I had no doubt, and it could be readily seen that her peculiar conduct arose from ignorance, but my association with her was a great injury to me. My work, instead of being a joy, became a burden, and every Sabbath morning I went to the school trembling, *lest I should* unwittingly draw upon myself

some of those stern reproofs which so disquieted me.

At length I mustered courage to speak to the superintendent, and begged to be allowed to go back to my alphabet class. But a change I had not expected was soon made, and I was left sole teacher of the class I was in.

This event made a great change in my position. For many, many months I went on happily with my work; I was happy with my pupils, and happy in Jesus. It was at that time that I could say—

Ten little girls will stand round me,
  And listen while I tell
Of Him who hung upon the tree
  To save their souls from hell;
Of Him who blessed the little ones,
  While those who stood around
Would fain have sent them all away,
  As angrily they frowned.

For nearly two years I continued teaching these young ones, and was then requested to go up higher. I was now to have what in school phraseology was termed "a Testament class." Two or three of my scholars were put up with me, so that I felt at home directly.

Here again I remained for some years, but I cannot remember any special result attending or following my labours. The Lord graciously helped me. I seemed to have no trouble in winning affection or gaining attention. My class was an orderly, early, regular, and loving

class, and, alas! I was content. *I did not look for the present salvation of the souls committed to my care.* I talked of Jesus, of His ability and willingness to save, of His love and mercy, of His kind consideration for those who were around Him on earth, of His wisdom and power, &c., &c. We read His history from the manger in Bethlehem to the cross on Calvary, but I do not think it ever occurred to me to say to these dear ones, "YE must be born again." I certainly hoped that my labours would result in the conversion of my scholars, but I looked for such results *in the future and not in the present.* Thus the time passed away until I became teacher of the girls' Bible class.

My difficulties during this period led me to think much of the plan of appointing two teachers to the same class. Since that time I have had many opportunities for observation, and have never known that plan answer well and thoroughly. A teacher who cannot attend the school both morning and afternoon should have a class of scholars who attend only once a day, and there are some of these in most schools. Or if such a class cannot be formed, a half-day or alternate Sunday teacher should be content to be what we sometimes expressively call a "stop gap," or perhaps a visitor, or anything else that will help on the work, without interfering with *the arrangement* of the classes. It always

appears to me that *a divided responsibility is an undesirable thing.* If it should happen that two teachers are really required for one class, then great care should be taken to appoint those only who think and speak alike, who can have frequent intercourse with each other to talk over their plans together, who will unitedly visit the scholars' homes, and prove that in "all things" they are "of one mind in the Lord."

The difficulties in the way of such appointments help to prove the other by far the better plan. Several reasons might be added to show why every effort should be made to avoid alternate teaching, but I must resume the records of the past.

CHAPTER III.

THE BIBLE CLASS.

When I entered the Bible class I found there six girls, varying from twelve to fifteen years of age. Strange girls I thought them to be, for they were giddy, listless, frivolous in manner, and apparently with no reverence for the Word of God. The first Sabbath morning I sat with them (for I cannot say I taught them) they chattered incessantly. One pulled my collar, another examined my mantle; one wished to know if my hair curled naturally, and another asked if I made my own clothes. I was completely bewildered; but I put their questions on one side as firmly as possible, and insisted on hearing their lesson — only a section of the First Catechism — which each of them repeated in as careless a manner as can well be imagined. Then we began to read. I announced the subject to be "The Birth of Christ," but there was no such thing as talking about what the Evangelist had written.

"How many chapters shall we read?" "How long shall we be getting through the book?" "Let

us make haste." Such were some of the observations made, and at length I gave way. We read on, on, on, through seven or eight chapters, until the books were called in, and the school was closed by singing and prayer.

In those days I took my dinner with me, and after morning service, when the weather was favourable, wended my way into the fields, and under the shade of some friendly tree ate my solitary meal, and then read and meditated until the time for afternoon school. On this Sunday my heart was very sad; I dreaded the afternoon. I wondered if I should ever obtain any influence over those thoughtless girls, and after thinking and planning, I carried my burden to the Saviour. I tried to put into some form what I desired to do for my class. I recalled my own early convictions, and, as far as I could, all my subsequent experience, and I came to the conclusion that I really desired that souls might be saved. I felt that I had not hitherto looked for this as an immediate result of the truth put before my scholars, but now I resolved in the strength of grace that I would aim at this, and expect this. Earnestly did I pray that the Lord would bless my labours, and give me not only a regular, orderly, and attentive, but also A SAVED CLASS.

My heart was relieved of part of its burden, and I entered the school-room feeling more than ever that the work in which I was engaged was a

holy work. "My class for Jesus" was the uppermost thought and purpose of my mind. I found six girls ready for me; but two of them were fresh faces, while two of my morning class were missing. I began at once to speak of Jesus, the babe at Bethlehem. I made no attempt to get them to read, but simply talked on, and found I gained a little attention. There seemed some slight reason to hope for success. I therefore determined not to be discouraged, and resolved to continue, though "faint, yet pursuing."

One Sabbath morning, when I was more than usually tried, our beloved superintendent minister came into the school-room. He walked round and spoke to several teachers and classes, and finally seated himself by my side. I was silent, and the girls began to titter.

At length Mr. C. said, "Well, Miss M., and what do you try to do here?"

"Teach, sir," I replied.

"And what do you try to accomplish?"

I feared to speak; but in the kindest and yet most determined manner he urged the question, until I answered, "To bring souls to Jesus."

"God bless you!" he fervently exclaimed. "Will you allow an old man to give you a little advice? 'I beseech you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called,' and while you are *heard* here, be sure you are '*read* and *known*' elsewhere."

Then, as he rose, he took my hand, and pressing it, affectionately added, "The morning cometh."

"How strange," I thought. "Did he read my feelings?"

"The morning cometh!" All was darkness then; but should I not look out for the morning? Should I not pray for it, watch for it, and expect it? Very frequently did these words cheer me when nearly overwhelmed, by reason of difficulties and perplexities. When almost in despair, because there seemed no response to my invitations to "Come to Jesus," I have sometimes felt that the expectation of the coming morning was worth worlds to me.

My class increased. By persevering kindness I gained the affection and attention of my scholars. "My class for Jesus," was still my motto; but as yet no soul seemed feeling after the truth, or seeking salvation. From a memorandum I have, belonging to that period, I find that the number of girls in my class increased to eighteen, all of whom attended pretty regularly, morning and afternoon. I always urged them to come both times, and found little difficulty, after they were once interested in our course of lessons.

Our school was not an orderly one. Our teachers were not educated; though, being for the most part members of Society, they were considered eligible for their work. Sometimes

they would ask me, "What plan do you pursue in order to keep your girls round you?" and as I was not aware of anything special in my plan, I could only answer,—"I try to interest them."

"But HOW?" they asked; and this question was not easily answered, though the thing seemed easily done.

In reviewing my work I may now say that much was to be attributed to my *regular attendance on the morning and afternoon of every Sabbath.* By this means I had the girls always under my own care—no other plan came into collision with mine—and the minds of the scholars were not dissipated by a perpetual change of teacher and subject.

Then I pursued a *course of lessons*, and thus secured continued interest and attention. In using the Catechism, instead of giving them a portion to be committed to memory, under promise of a "ticket" reward, I took with me the Second or Third Catechism, and each Sabbath gave a quarter of an hour to the subject which was introduced. That time was quite long enough; my girls obtained a good idea of the doctrines believed by us, and could adduce the proofs from the Word of God. At the time of which I write, I believe any one of them would have answered any questions on the subjects which we had taken, not perhaps in the words *of the book*, but in such a way as to show they

understood what they said, and were not merely repeating by rote.

In addition to these things, *I would hear any hymn or portion of Scripture which any girl had voluntarily committed to memory without the promise or prospect of reward.* Perhaps I would say in the class, "I was reading the 27th Psalm this week, and it struck me as very beautiful," and then I would speak on some of the verses. Next Sabbath I would be sure to hear from one or two or more, "Teacher, I have learnt the 27th Psalm." Sometimes I would draw attention to a hymn, not the well known and familiar ones, but such as the 38th, "O God, of good the unfathomed sea," &c.; or the 210th, "Thee will I love, my strength, my tower," &c. I would read it to them, point out its beauties, and often get one of them to read it after me. *The next Sabbath the hymn would usually be known by all the class.* I mention these things because I am sure that in such a class imposed lessons are regarded with great aversion; and I have given some description of "my plan" (if such it may be called), because it seemed adapted to the scholars, and was graciously blessed by God.

Perhaps an illustration of the effects following one part of the course I pursued will best show its general advantages.

More than ten years after the period of which I have now been writing, I received a letter from

one who had been a scholar at that time. In that letter she said:—

"Never shall I forget the impression made on my mind when you said, 'Girls, have you ever noticed the 625th hymn?' and then read it to us. I remember we all listened so intently while you read, and I thought it strange that man, with all his difficulties and troubles, should be considered 'the more favoured race;' but as you opened up the scheme of redemption, and showed how 'Love's glorious work was done,' we acknowledged that man was indeed privileged.

"But, dear teacher, what I wanted to say is this, that at a very important crisis in my life, that is, when the burden of sin was so heavy upon me, and the way seemed so beset with snares that I cried in my despair, 'It is no use, I can never be a Christian!' then the voice I had once so loved to listen to seemed to be repeating—

'Sinners, rejoice! your peace is made!'

In a moment the teacher, the hymn, the class, were vividly before me. Text after text, hymn after hymn recurred to me, until my mind rested on the passage, 'For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.'" (Ephes. ii. 14.)

I need not multiply instances, though I could *do so.* To God be all the glory!

Several years passed away in connection with that class. In looking over the names of girls who were then under my care, many reminiscences arise; and some histories, as far as I am able to record them, may be of interest to others as well as to myself. But before doing so, let me refer to a period which constituted an interval in my work, and also to a change in the character of my work. Then there may appropriately follow some reference to scholars who have passed through the various classes to which I have been appointed.

CHAPTER IV.

ABSENCE FROM HOME.

In the year 18— I was called to leave for a season the sphere of labour I had so long occupied. For four months I resided in a small village in another county. Of course I went to the Wesleyan Sunday-school, and was soon re-engaged in teaching. My work here was thoroughly different from that "at home," although I still had a class of senior girls. But I allude to this period because it was while absent from home that I received the glad news of the conversion of three of my former pupils.

One had become a teacher, and she wrote me as follows:—

"Do you remember that four years ago you wrote to me on my birthday? You then urged me to decide for Jesus, and told me how much easier it would be to serve God in my youthful days, &c. I felt it at the time, but fancied I should be more ready when I was older, and so *put it off*. Now, dear teacher, see the goodness

of God to me. Last week I was looking over the mementoes of your affection, and amongst them was treasured your letter. I opened it, and read it over. The Spirit of God applied much of it to my soul, and there and then I knelt down, and begged my Father in heaven to accept my heart, so long withheld. In the evening I went to the prayer-meeting, and while my own dear father was praying, I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and was saved. Dear teacher, you will rejoice, I know. I think, too, my sister N., and likewise F. J., have something to tell you."

A day or two after, the other welcome notes arrived, and the accounts they contained were somewhat similar.

The Rev. J. P. had been preaching anniversary sermons for the Sunday-school. His morning text was Isaiah lv. 10, 11, and having spoken most encouragingly to the teachers on the promise, "It shall not return unto me void," he appealed to the scholars, especially the elder ones, and asked if the Word taught had had its due effect on them, and accomplished in them God's design. The dear girls were broken down under the appeal. The Spirit had long been striving with them, and now they yielded to those strivings; and in the prayer-meeting after the evening service they ventured their souls on Jesus, and were able to rejoice in the forgiveness of all their sins.

I may add that these three girls are still resident in C., and all of them members of the Wesleyan Church. Two of them are married, and their husbands also are walking in the "way everlasting."

CHAPTER V.

SENIOR SCHOLARS: THE ADULT CLASS.

In 18— an important change took place in my Sunday-school career. I had the privilege of being intimately acquainted with a lady who came to reside near us, and who joined the Society class of which I was a member. She was a sweet Christian, and we had much profitable intercourse. I talked to her of my class, my difficulties, my trials and temptations, my joys and sorrows, my hopes and fears.

Just at this time I had been grieved at the absence of one of my class in whom I had taken deep interest, and to whom I had become warmly attached. There was much promise of good in her, and I longed for her salvation. Several times I called at her home, but never saw her. From the parents I could obtain no satisfactory reason for her absence, and indeed could get nothing from them about her except, "We are much obliged for all your kindness, but F. will not go any more."

One day I went into the town at an unusual

hour for me; for, living two miles off, I seldom walked in but on those days when there would be some service at the chapel. I met F. in the street, and begged her to give me a reason for her absence. At first she was unwilling, but at last said that for a long time she had been ridiculed for coming. She had been told she was so tall that she looked quite conspicuous in her place in the school; that in the chapel all eyes were upon her, &c., &c. And then her last, but not least, grievance was, that the teacher whose class was next to mine in the room treated her with great disdain, and though she often saw her, never spoke to her in the street, or even acknowledged her by the slightest courtesy.

Very warmly did the girl speak, and the hot tears of wounded pride and self-respect started forth as she finished by saying, "Nobody but you and the superintendent care whether I come or not, and I am not a child now."

All my persuasions and reasonings failed to assure her, and F. was lost to the school and to the Church. Alas! as I remember her history, I fear that she is yet "of the world."

Soon after this I removed into the town. Just then the question, "What becomes of our senior scholars?" was agitating the churches. My friend and I had much conversation and prayer *over* this matter; and as the subject was being

discussed by all denominations of Christians, it was deemed desirable to introduce it at our teachers' quarterly meeting. In many places, "Select Classes," "Catechumen Classes," "Adult Bible Classes," were being formed for the express purpose of retaining the elder scholars, and I was wishful to see something of the kind in our school.

Accordingly, at the said meeting, I proposed that four girls, who were all nearly fifteen years of age, should be taken from my class, and my friend be requested to meet them in the chapel. They were only afternoon scholars, and I trembled lest they should be either allured or frightened away. My friend had kindly promised to assist in any way the teachers' meeting might decide. I felt so enthusiastically about the matter, that I was irritated at the indifference manifested by our assembled conclave.

"Doubtless," said one, "it would be well to keep our scholars a little longer; but it is very unlikely such a plan would succeed."

"Oh," said another, "Miss M. is ambitious. she has girls now much older than any boys we keep, and she ought to be content."

To such an ambition I pleaded guilty, but thought there was nothing sinful about it.

There was no decided objection made to the division of the class; but it was resolved that my friend should take the junior portion in the

school-room, and that I should have the four girls in the chapel, and "just try how the scheme would answer."

I did not like my earnest purpose called a "scheme," but I determined by God's grace to persevere, to aim for the salvation of souls, and to prove to my fellow-teachers that, with the blessing of God on His own Word, and on untiring labours, our young people could be kept together.

I thought myself rather sanguine in my expectations, but the class succeeded much more quickly than even I anticipated. Several young girls who had formerly been in the school came back, and in a very few months my four girls had eleven added to them.

I had many trials to encounter, much coldness to battle with; but Jesus was my strength, and *never did He fail me.* A great outcry was made by some against what they called "innovations." At one meeting a young man asked if I had not "done wrong in having singing and prayer up-stairs? Were not the opening services of the school sufficient? Why did I waste the time intended for teaching?" I explained that though *I* attended the opening services in the school-room, many of my young people did not, and could not, as the time for beginning the school was too early for them; that when I went up-stairs and was *ready to begin,* the members of the class were just

arriving. While we sang a verse or two they took their places, and then a short but comprehensive prayer prepared our minds for the study of the Word of God. Other objections were as easily answered, and after a time I was just *let alone.*

I began most thoroughly to enjoy my work. At times the weight of responsibility would trouble me, and most earnestly did I cry, "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O my God." Our allotted time was from half-past two to half-past three, and it sometimes proved far too short for the consideration of our subject. So much interest was excited when reference was made to the manners and customs of the East, or when any description was given of Biblical countries, that I became uneasy lest, while mental food was supplied, there should be too little application of the Word to the conscience. Many a day I went from my class to my closet, to bewail my unfaithfulness in this matter, and earnestly did I ask the Lord to teach me what to do.

One Sunday I told my simple tale to the class, my anxieties and doubts as to the propriety of the manner in which our lessons were discussed. I did not think that we were wrong, but I felt that time was precious, and I longed for their souls "as one that must give account." I proposed giving them an hour once a week, if they would spare it, in addition to the one on Sunday. We fixed upon Wednesday evening, from seven to

eight o'clock, and the following week all assembled in my own house.

The Lord then laid it on my heart to give invitations to the young ladies employed in the drapers' and milliners' shops and workrooms. From one house six young people responded, from another four, and from another three. These all requested me to have the meeting an hour later, so that they might ensure a regular attendance. We therefore began at eight, and continued till a quarter or half-past nine, as circumstances permitted. Fortunately I had a large room in which to receive them, for in the winter evenings we have numbered as many as thirty. The Lord began graciously to work among us; there were some earnest inquirers after the way of salvation. I might here enumerate several cases, but perhaps the most acceptable way for presenting them will be to record hereafter as much of individual histories as I may be able.

In the year 18—, in obedience to the call of my pastor and the need of the Church, I became a Wesleyan Methodist class leader, and had a class to meet after the preaching service on Tuesday evenings. For three years I met both the Tuesday Society class and the Wednesday Bible class, but in the winter of 18— my health so sadly failed, that I was compelled to give up the latter. I tried hard to induce some other lady to take it, *but could* not succeed; and to this day, although

Bible classes have multiplied in the town, there is still one wanted to meet the special need of these young females. Oh that some of my Christian sisters would labour in this field! I am sure that not only here, but almost everywhere, a rich harvest might be reaped.

The Sunday afternoon class I have continued to meet from its commencement. For a few years I have been compelled to have it at my own house, as my affliction has rendered me unable to walk to the chapel. The character of the class has somewhat changed, inasmuch as now I sometimes have the middle-aged and the old as well as the young; indeed, my door is open to any who will come. Out of this class a Society class has recently risen, and I meet it immediately after the Bible class is over.

From many quarters I have had sweet sympathy. Our ministers have kindly visited the class, and conducted it; other Churches have manifested a kindly interest in us; Christian brothers and sisters at a distance remember us in prayer, and send us messages of love and kindness; former members of the class often visit us and cheer us on the way; and the best of all is, God is with us. He hath not forgotten to be gracious; now and then a few precious souls are saved. Only a few! but, glory be to God, the few are valuable.

All the way through I have had much to en-

courage, but at the same time much to distress and discourage. Sometimes I have had a long period of seeming darkness; I have looked for human help, and it has failed; have been met with coldness instead of sympathy, and have appeared to labour in vain. But in the midst of all I have remembered, "I am doing it for Jesus." I have carried my anxieties, my hopes, my fears, my discouragements, my weakness, and my class to the mercy-seat, and "my God has supplied all my need." Yes! after all, I have much to be thankful for, and though I cannot work now as before, yet—

"I'll praise my Maker while I 've breath;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures."

CHAPTER VI.

RESULTS.

THERE had been a long season of spiritual dearth. During seven years I had heard of only one conversion that was in any degree attributable to Sunday-school influence. That one had been a source of great encouragement to me.

It was a young woman, who had been a member of our Bible class, and of whom I had often hoped good things; indeed, the tree seemed covered thick with blossom. But to my grief the girl left, and went to work in a paper-mill some miles distant. As far as I heard of her, all spiritual concern was gone; she launched into sin, and became a giddy, trifling, careless young woman. When she left school she made me a promise she would attend the Wesleyan ministry. In the midst of all she kept that promise, and there, in the appointed means of grace, the Lord found her out; the Word, like a fire, melted her stubborn heart, and she was led to cast her soul on Jesus. Oh, how I rejoiced when she wrote me word of the gracious change.

She is now a steady, consistent member of the Church, and an active Sunday-school teacher. She is poor and uneducated, but she has been the means of raising a school in connection with that Wesleyan Society. She walked about and obtained scholars; stirred up the few members of the Church to assist in teaching, until they had a school of thirty children, with a class of sixteen young women, in charge of a competent teacher.

In a letter I received, dated March 17, 18—, she says :—

"It is two years this month since I gave my heart to God. Oh, the mercies of those two years; they call for songs of loudest praise! I can never praise God enough for what He has done for me! I assure you I think of you often; and when I am tempted to give up my class, because I live so far from the school, I remember you used to walk two miles every Sabbath day to teach me, and then I take courage. A work of grace has begun in the Young Women's Bible class, and we are looking for great things. Pray for us, dear teacher!"

The account of this young person's conversion I gave to my class, and read to them her frequent letters as I received them. Sometimes there were visible signs of feeling, but no one decided to be the Lord's.

On Sunday, March 18, 18—, I went to my

afternoon class from what we thought would be the death-bed of a young friend. She had no connection with our class, but I had visited her during her illness, and that afternoon she sent a message by me to the young people, earnestly entreating them to give their hearts to God, and telling them how she regretted not having done so in the days of her health.

As I related what I had seen in that sick-room many tears were shed, and when at the close of the Bible lesson I inquired, "What message shall I take to that dying girl?" the sobs were most distressing. I thought no one would speak, but as we rose to separate, one stepped behind the others, threw her arms round my neck, and exclaimed, "Teacher, I will, by God's grace, begin to serve Him; tell your young friend that I promise in God's name."

The next Sabbath I was ill, and unable to be with my class. The following week I was there, but the young person I have just mentioned was not present, nor did I hear anything of her, so that I knew not whether she had obtained a change of heart.

On Monday, the 28th of March, our monthly teachers' prayer-meeting was held. An unusual influence pervaded the room; every one seemed to feel "the Lord is amongst us," and I believe that a glad expectation was in the hearts of those who had been longing for tokens of good.

Presently a young teacher broke out in praises to God because He had set his soul at liberty, and he could rejoice in the forgiveness of sins. A young man beside him immediately began to cry for mercy, and would not take a denial. Five dear young people, all members of my Bible class, simultaneously burst into heartrending exclamations of "Oh, teacher! pray for me!" "Lord, save me!" "I am lost, lost! what a sinner I have been! what shall I do?" The poor girls clung round me, and I scarcely knew how to proceed. Just then one or two unwise young men began to sing, and in their excitement, different words and different tunes. All my attempts to make my dear girls hear my voice were utterly vain; nothing could be distinguished in the confusion but the increasing cries of agony from the young teacher, "Give me mercy! Lord, I must have mercy! I won't go without mercy!"

There was not any gentleman present who could quietly direct him to Christ, and all that was said to him was shouted into his ears by those who cried—"Believe! only believe!" and then broke out into singing. I bore it until I could bear it no longer, and committing my girls to the care of a dear Christian friend who had accompanied me to the meeting, I tremblingly crossed the room and knelt down beside the young man. His demands for mercy were urgent, *indeed they* sounded presumptuous; but as he

cried for "Mercy! mercy!" I added the all-prevailing plea, "For Christ's sake; because the Saviour died for me."

At length he reiterated my words, and mightily pleaded, "Save, for the Saviour's sake." The Lord speedily answered the petition, the "Spirit of adoption" was given, and the glad heart found vent in exclaiming—

> "Happy day that fixed my choice
> On Thee, my Saviour and my God," &c.

Afterwards he looked round the room, and said, "Ah! I have taught here many a time when I needed teaching the very first step in the way of salvation; but, by the grace of God, *I* WILL *teach now.*"

The five girls went home sorrowing.

The next day the young man who had cried so earnestly for mercy came to me and said, "I never spent such a night! I laid me down *in peace!* That was a new thing. I awoke, and my first feeling was, 'I am an heir of glory.'" Then he asked, "Do you remember at the February prayer-meeting praying especially for unconverted teachers?"

I told him that they had been much upon my mind, and in my closet I continually remembered them; for there were five who sat near together, and their levity often grieved me.

"Well," he continued, "you did pray for them,

and the Spirit of God whispered to my heart, and said, 'That means you.' I tried to shake it off, but in vain. All through the month of March it haunted me. Then came the death of those four little children; then the serious illness of your friend, Miss D. My impressions deepened; the last Monday in March came, and the teacher's prayer-meeting was to be held as usual. I felt for me it would be a *deciding time*, that I must find mercy, or I should lose my soul for ever. However, I meant to be very quiet, to try and rest my soul on Jesus, and then join the church, and make no noise about it. But when I heard William praise God that He had pardoned all *his* sins, my resolution failed, and I could not help crying out for mercy."

Such was the account given by one. Then came the other, and gave me his story.

"My first impressions," said he, "I received in this way. A little girl had been to tea with us, and I went up the hill with her when she was going home. We went chatting along, and she said—

"'How fast the evening has gone, William! It seems such a little while I have been at your house.'

"'Ah!' I said, 'it's meeting and parting all the world over.'

"'Yes,' she said. 'Won't it be nice when the *time comes* we sing about, when we shall never

part again. That will be in heaven. *I mean to be there. Do you?*'

"I felt startled, and began to say to myself, 'If N. is thinking about that, I ought.'

"Then came her brief sickness and happy death; and by God's grace I decided to give up sin, and seek His favour; and here I am to-day, a *saved sinner.*"

On the same day came one of my dear girls, with joy beaming in her countenance, and she said, "Oh, teacher, I am so happy! for Jesus has saved my soul." I rejoiced with her, "thanked God, and took courage."

One or two more came to see me on that day, but all sorrowing. On the following Saturday another came, and told me she "had laid her sins on Jesus, and He had given her such sweet peace."

On the Sabbath morning I took my place with peculiarly mingled feelings: joy that some were saved, sympathy for those yet in distress, and deep anxiety for the careless: these filled my heart, and each feeling struggled for the mastery. What to say or do I knew not, but the Lord soon made known His will and way.

One young person said, "Teacher, may I repeat that favourite hymn of yours, 'Arise, my soul, arise'? I never saw its beauty till Friday night."

Of course I assented, and with much feeling

and emphasis she went on till she came to the verse—

"Five bleeding wounds He bears,
Received on Calvary."

She repeated these two lines, and then commenced the third—

"They pour" . . . .

Her voice faltered, her countenance lost its brightness. I saw it was a time of temptation, and I said, "Go on, F. It is all true."

With a desperate effort she burst out—

"They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly speak *for me*."

And then she added, "Oh, yes, FOR ME! Oh, if all this class would but believe it!"

Every heart seemed melted, every cheek was wet with tears, and I, taking the last verse of the hymn, repeated, slowly and emphatically, those delightful words—

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear,
He owns me for His child,
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And, Father, Abba Father, cry!"

"How many of you can say this?" I asked.

There was but the one present who could.

Then I inquired, "How many desire it?"

"*I do*, teacher," came earnestly from every lip.

"Shall I take your names down as seekers for mercy?"

It was agreed, and I wrote them in my pocket-book. *Now I believe that all those six girls have their names written in the "Lamb's Book of Life."*

The work of grace went on. We had no more exciting meetings, but we had some very precious seasons. Several young people yielded to the strivings of God's Spirit, and came out on the Lord's side.

As might be expected, there were those who looked coldly on the work. Some wondered "how long it would last." Others thought it was "shocking to admit such converts into the Society." But, glory be to Jesus! of all who were then brought into communion with the people of God, only one proved to be professing what she did not experience.

In remembering that period, I cannot but be profoundly grateful to God; but when I think of the many years during which I have been a teacher, I can but feel that on the whole I have been far from successful. Comparatively few have been brought to God. Oh, how I long to see souls saved! I know we must not estimate success only by the cases of good that we hear of, for the indirect influence of our teaching will continue while life and time endure. "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he

receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient. (Jas. v. 7, 8.)

It has been my rule as far as possible to continue my intercourse with my scholars after they have left the school. This has been done personally, or by letters, according to circumstances. By this means I have been able to watch their course, and have become acquainted with many parts of their history. I have usually kept a note-book for jotting down various memoranda concerning my class, and have preserved the many letters I have received. On looking over these, I find many things which are to me peculiarly interesting. I do not pretend to have complete histories of my scholars, but from the materials I have preserved it may be possible to put together a few sketches which will interest and benefit others.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW HYMN-BOOK.

K. E. was for some time a member of our Bible class. She entered when it was first formed, and remained with us some little time. After a while she took a situation in a large mansion in the neighbourhood, and speedily found that it was inconvenient for her to attend on a Sunday afternoon. During her connection with us she had often appeared impressed with the importance of eternal things, and sometimes we hoped she would give her heart to God, and her hand to His Church; but just when the Word seemed to be influencing her life, we lost her.

For two years and a half she occasionally came to see me; twice a year I made a point of writing to her, and generally received a most affectionate and grateful reply.

About three years after she left the school, she went with the family she served to stay some time in Scotland. While there, her sister wrote to her, and told her of the work of the Holy Spirit in our Bible class, giving her also an

account of her own conversion and subsequent union with the Church. Her sister's letter very deeply interested K. E., and served to recall past impressions. She wrote to me, begging that I would send her a new Wesleyan Sunday-school Hymn-Book, "the one just introduced into the school;" adding, "and please, dear teacher, mark for me one of your favourite verses."

This was a difficulty; but praying for the Spirit's guidance, I drew a pencil line under and above the following stanza:—

> "Yet, Lord, we humbly venture nigh,
> Because Thou camest down to die;
> And this is all the plea we make,
> Oh save us for Thy mercy's sake."

Then turning up one corner of the leaf, that the book might naturally open there, I transmitted it by post to Scotland, accompanied by an affectionate and earnest letter. An extract from the reply I received will tell the rest.

"For three days before your letter came, I had no rest day or night. I cannot say I was utterly miserable, because I kept thinking there was a glimmer of hope; but I did all my work in a dreamy, listless sort of way, and again and again I was told I was 'uncanny,' or asked if I was 'daft.' But when at length one morning the housemaid came running into my room with your packet, exclaiming, 'Now, my lass, here is your *heart-cure*,' she little guessed how near the truth *she was*.

"As soon as she left the room I locked the door, and threw myself on my knees to read your letter. How can I tell what followed? I prayed and wept, and wept and prayed. Then I opened the hymn-book and read the verse you marked, at first without any light; again, with a feeble understanding of the truth that if I was saved it would be *because Christ died.* Next I noticed that *all the plea was the mercy of God,* while I had been telling the Lord *how often and how long I had prayed,* how wretched I *was, and how I longed for His salvation.* Now I prayed again, and the words of David came to my mind, 'Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.' My distress increased. I was becoming more and more conscious that I was vile, guilty, wretched, when in the midst of the tumult in my breast I seemed to feel a voice saying to me, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' I was quieted; I looked again at your letter. You had directed me to the parables of Jesus in the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke. While reading them with deeper interest than I had ever before felt, a bell rang which it was my duty to answer. I started, but even then, as I ran down the stairs in haste, I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour.

"I was much relieved in my mind, and more cheerful all the evening; but it was in the middle of that night, while lying awake thinking that this salvation was a strange thing—the innocent

dying for the guilty, the just for the unjust, &c.—that my heart was filled with peace and joy. The rest I will tell you with my own tongue when I return."

I have given this letter verbatim, only altering the orthography and punctuation. Before K. E. came back from Scotland I received another letter, from which the following are extracts, with the simple alterations just mentioned; and I may here add that in all letters I have made, when necessary, these alterations, and these only.

"I am still striving to walk in the narrow way. I am surrounded with temptations and snares, but the Lord gives me grace to resist Satan. Oh, it was the happiest day of my life when I fixed my choice on Jesus. He is my Saviour. Do you know, dear teacher, that the first anxious thoughts I had were after reading that little book you wrote, entitled, 'I am so happy!' I thought so much about it. I did not know who wrote it. F. sent it to me, and I fancied one of the preachers wrote it; but G. told me all about it. I began to pray then, and the Lord led me on until the change took place I told you of in my last letter. I cannot help regretting that I did not begin this life sooner; but when you used to talk and write about Jesus waiting to receive sinners, and all that, I thought, '*Oh, yes!* it seems easy enough to talk about;

but I cannot make myself feel earnest, and I won't pretend.' But Jesus is mine now; and though sometimes I am cast down, and long for some one to talk to about good things, I yet rejoice to know that here in Scotland God hears and answers prayer. Do you still remember me when you pray for your class."

In another letter she wrote:—

"I am expecting to leave here and return next week. Will you please, dear teacher, let me have one more letter of kind advice. Write a good long letter, so that I may receive it on Tuesday, and then I shall read it again and again on the journey. If there are plenty of Scripture references I shall like it, as I always look them out in my little school Bible. When I come back, I hope again to occupy my old seat in the Bible class and the chapel; and I daresay things that prevented my attendance before will not now, for the love of Christ makes many hard things easy. I have never enjoyed my Sabbaths as I did at the time I was constant to the class. I wish I had my time over again, but that is useless. Only think, I shall be home again in a week. Please don't disappoint me of a letter."

K. came home and cast in her lot with the people of God, and we had her again with us in the Bible class. On one occasion when I was

away from home I received a letter from her, and another from her sister, and very welcome they were. K. wrote as follows:—

"We had a very nice Bible lesson on Sunday; your friend took part of the history of Joseph, where he told his dreams. I liked him; but we all missed you very much, and then we prayed that the Lord would restore you to us. Mr. A. prayed, and before he prayed he asked us, 'What shall I ask the Lord?' and we all said, 'For teacher to come back well.' You will be glad to hear that I have had a letter from N. H. She says she is sorry she never wrote to you, but she is such a bad scholar. She is comfortable and happy in her place, but has nobody that will talk about Jesus. She says she often thinks of how our dear teacher used to talk about our souls, and urge us to choose whom we would serve; and then she asks me if I have chosen. I shall write and tell her what the Lord has done for me. Will you put a little bit for her in my letter?—Yours affectionately, K. E."

I will append the letter from her sister:—

"My dear Teacher,—I have always been privileged to see you when I pleased, so I have not had many letters. I have good news to tell you, so I made up my mind to write. On Sunday, *Mr. A.* taught us, and we had a good time; but

in the evening there was such a nice meeting, and two of our dear class, whom you have often prayed for, gave their hearts to God, and found peace through believing in Jesus. I mean N. B. M. and J. T. I don't know what the people thought; for us girls were so glad, that we got around them, and seemed as if we would carry them away rejoicing. It was settled that I should write and tell you. Will you, dear teacher, send them one of your nice letters?

"Your affectionate scholar,

"F. E."

I do not now see K. E. very often; but she still worships with us, and continues in the way to heaven. I am praying that she may "grow in grace."

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE ROCK.

I WAS one day talking with a friend who kept a draper's shop in our town, when I noticed behind the counter a young girl who was a stranger to me. There was something most attractive in her appearance, and I felt irresistibly drawn towards her. When my friend's wife came in, I asked, "Who is that pretty girl?"

"Oh," she replied, "it is our new apprentice; we have had her up from O. She is very young, and I am so anxious about her. I dread to let her go out after business hours, lest she should get undesirable acquaintance; and yet the dear girl must have a change."

"Would you mind introducing her to me?" I inquired.

"My dear ——, I should desire nothing better for her; but not now, for she evidently sees that we are talking about her."

The necessary introduction was brought about a few days after, and I invited E. R. to come and *see me* any evening she liked. She was very

much upon my mind, and often did I pray that I might be directed what to say to her, so as to win her confidence.

It was rather early one Wednesday evening when she made her appearance at my house. Though very shy and timid at first, she gradually became sociable and communicative, and appeared greatly to appreciate the kind notice which was taken of her in C. She had never been from home before, and feared when she came to C. she would be "very dull." I found she had been trained by conscientious and thoroughly moral parents, had attended regularly the house of God, and thought herself a Christian.

We chatted till nearly eight o'clock, the hour when my Bible class met. I told her I must go up-stairs, as I had an engagement from eight till nine, and by that time she must return; but before bidding her good-bye, I said I would tell her about our class. I did so, and she expressed a wish to unite with us. Accordingly she went up with me, and appeared deeply interested in our subject, and at the close whispered to me, "O dear Miss ——, I am not good."

In the course of the week arrangements were made for her regular attendance on Wednesday evenings; but on Sundays her employers preferred that she should attend with them at the Congregational chapel.

Time went on. Instead of having only E. R. from that house of business, I soon had three besides, so heartily had E. spoken of our meetings. I often saw her at other times, and could thank God that the "eyes of her understanding were enlightened," and that she was earnestly seeking an interest in the atonement. So simple and childlike were all her inquiries and remarks, that all hearts seemed to warm towards her.

Knowing it to be the wish of my friends that she should spend her Sundays with them, I avoided inviting her to the Sabbath-class. The young folks, however, had no such scruples, and many pressing requests did E. receive; but the time was not quite come.

At length, on one memorable Sabbath (I shall never forget the day), my desires and hopes were fully realised. We had assembled in our usual quarters in the chapel; one large pew was well filled, and the next partly so. The glorious sunshine was streaming in upon us, and the "church-going bell" sounded distinctly in our ears. I had just found the hymn, and was about to begin, when a step was heard, not like that of one accustomed to come in, but a faltering, hesitating step, causing us all involuntarily to look round. It was E. R. Looks of welcome encouraged her, and she came on. Passing by all her young friends, who would fain have detained her to sit *beside them*, she came close to me. The young

lady who always occupied that seat, kindly moved, and E. sat down, slipping her hand into mine.

I arose, and gave out the 189th hymn. O, how sweetly my girls used to sing! When I read the verse—

> "Father, thine everlasting grace
> Our scanty thought surpasses far;
> Thy heart still melts with tenderness,
> Thy arms of love still open are,
> Returning sinners to receive,
> That mercy they may taste and live"—

E.'s emotion became extreme; she clasped my arm with both hands, and the tears streamed down her cheeks. The prayer followed, and then we opened our Bibles. The subject for the day was "the sure foundation," and the groundwork of our remarks was the eleventh verse of the third chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. What was advanced on that occasion I need not now recount. Suffice it to say that it was a precious season, and we realised Christ as "all in all."

Our meeting was over. We were leaving our seats, and walking towards the chapel door, when we were arrested by E.'s voice.

"Stop, teacher, dear! Stop, girls," she cried. "I must tell you before Satan prevents me. O girls!

'*On Christ, the solid rock*, I stand.'

"I! *I* stand! Do you believe it?

'ON CHRIST, THE SOLID ROCK, I STAND.'"

And then, overcome with emotion, she burst into hysterical sobs.

We were obliged to leave the chapel, as a Society class was about to meet, so I took E. home with me. A few of the members of the Bible class went with us, and we joined in praising God for the work He had accomplished. After this, E. R. came on Sunday as well as Wednesday, and gave evidence of genuine piety.

When our young friend's term of apprenticeship expired, and she left us for her home in a distant county, we all mourned. But her light was to shine in another part of the Lord's vineyard, and we bade her "God speed." It was a pleasure to hear of her occasionally, and the letter which informed me that she had become a Sunday-school teacher was a very welcome one indeed.

At the present time E. R. is still walking in the way of God's commandments. She can still say—

"On Christ, the solid rock, I stand."

CHAPTER IX.

DISCOURAGED, BUT NOT HOPELESS.

L. A. first attracted my attention by her regular attendance at the house of God. Our seats were far apart, so that some time elapsed ere I obtained an introduction to her, or was able to address her in any way. As soon as the service was over she was gone; she appeared to speak to no one, and I thought she must be very solitary. I longed to have her as a member of my Sabbath afternoon Bible class, but scarcely knew how to manage it.

At length I resolved to name my wishes in the class. I found one or two of the young people knew her, but they spoke of her as peculiarly reserved, and of an unsocial disposition. However, they were willing to take an invitation from me, and, as one of them expressed it, "they would see what they could do with her." To their great surprise, the invitation was immediately accepted; and they called on me during the following week to tell me that they had arranged to bring her with them to the class on the *following Sunday.*

On November 25th, 18—, I had the pleasure of entering L. A.'s name in my book. She was then about sixteen years of age, with a very thoughtful-looking countenance, and extremely shy and timid; but I soon found her intelligent and inquiring, always deeply interested in the subjects we were considering. Only by slow degrees did I obtain her confidence on spiritual matters. Many proofs of affection reached me in a quiet way, but for two years she was determinately dumb when I spoke to her personally on the way of salvation. At length the heavy sigh, the starting tear, or the smothered sob, gave evidence that the Spirit of God had convinced of sin, and that there would be no rest for her soul until she found it at the cross of Christ.

At the close of one of our monthly prayer-meetings, I asked her to walk with me, and in that walk she confided to me her deep anxiety respecting her own salvation, frequently exclaiming, "I am a lost sinner, a lost sinner!" I endeavoured to lead her thoughts to Him whose mission it was to seek and save the lost, but no ray of light seemed to penetrate her soul's darkness. After that evening, L. avoided personal conversation. She was still regular at the Bible class, and at all services held in the chapel. She also continued coming to our week-evening meeting in my own house, but not one word would *she reply* to any questions concerning her spi-

ritual condition. Nevertheless it was increasingly evident that anguish of soul was her portion. Her countenance was deplorably sad, and she had a jaded, tired look, as if sleep had forsaken her. Indeed, she became so ill that her relatives sent her away for change of air. While she was away I received a letter from her, an extract from which will best show the state of mind she was in :—

"The country is looking very beautiful; how I wish you were here, that we could take a ramble in the woods together, and have a nice long talk. The birds are singing delightfully, and every one seems so happy and gay, that I am obliged to appear cheerful; but, after all, *there is an aching void within.* I am not happy, and I cannot be so until I am quite sure that I am saved. Oh, my dear friend, I do so long to realise this; but it seems almost too great a thing to hope for. When I think of my sinfulness, I am full of doubts and fears. Sometimes I feel as if I cannot believe anything, and yet I know it is wicked to give way to these feelings. I was very, very low on Sunday afternoon, when I thought of you all; but I knew you would remember me when you were praying for the absent ones. I heard a good sermon at church, but it was not like being in our own old pew, listening to your voice. I long to have a letter from you; I can never thank you

enough for all your kindness to me, I am so unworthy of it."

In this there was much to encourage, but after a while a sorrowful change took place. After a month in the country, L. A. returned to us with her health much improved, but the pungency of conviction had passed away. With a somewhat indifferent tone she informed me that she had made up her mind to think no more of her own sinfulness or need of a Saviour; but to come as before to all the means of grace, enjoy them as far as she could, and *leave the rest to be settled by-and-by*. I saw it was useless to talk, so simply repeating the apostle's words, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation," I left her.

Again we went on as before. By neither sign nor word could I gain any insight into the experiences of L. A. Week after week, month after month passed away, but there seemed no difference. She was constant in attendance, listened as before, but never gave a hint of what was passing in her mind.

One afternoon the Lord graciously revealed Himself to a young girl who had been but a short time with us. She had been touched by the history of the Cross, and in all simplicity of faith she ventured on the atoning sacrifice. The *lesson* was over, and we were about to engage in

prayer, when this saved one begged that we would praise God, because He had turned her night into gladsome day, adding, "Jesus is a Saviour still." Involuntarily I looked at L.; a heartrending sigh escaped her, and that was all.

As we went home, I introduced her to an earnest, godly woman, who was employed in the town as a missionary, and I said, "I am going to send Mrs. —— to see you."

"Thank you very much," she replied, and we thought there was a point gained. But, alas! the next morning I received the following note:—

"Will you be kind enough to ask that person who I saw with you last night, not to call here, as I do not think aunt would approve of it, and I do not want to cause any unpleasantness. It was most kind of you to propose her coming, but it would be of no use; she could not possibly do more for me than you have done. I am further off from being a Christian than ever; I sometimes think I shall never be saved. If I am not, after all the privileges I have had, and the trouble you have taken with me, my condemnation will be great indeed. I am grieved to tell you that I have not been so anxious about it lately. My mind is much taken up with other things, and it is only when a fear of future

punishment crosses my mind that I wish I was a Christian. The cares of this world have choked the good seed that was sown in my heart. It is of no use to come to the meetings unless I am in earnest. I hope that time will come some day."

Very much saddened was I on receipt of this letter; but as I had often done in former cases, so now, I spread the letter before the Lord. I wrestled with Him in prayer, until I had the answer in the application of the promise, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it." (John xiv. 13, 14.) Encouraged by this, I wrote to L., begging her to come as usual and join us in our meetings. Once more I set forth the all-sufficiency of the Saviour, the efficacy of "the precious blood," and urged her to accept the offered salvation.

As far as the Bible class was concerned, my letter was successful. That meeting she attended, and the public worship of God on Sunday evenings; but there grew an increasing coldness and hardness about her, positively painful to witness. You could not but think that there was in that poor heart of hers a great deal of obstinate unbelief, and yet God had not forgotten her. The Spirit continued His strivings, the

gospel still found its way to her heart, and once more she wrote as follows:—

"This is a New Year, and for two years I have resisted all your wishes to converse with me; but this morning I feel compelled to tell you a little about myself. I always find it very difficult to speak about myself, and could not possibly do it to a stranger. Indeed, I do not think I could to any one but you, for I always feel that you understand me better than any one else. I have no good news to tell you, though I am writing.

'Dark! dark! dark! I still must say,
Amid the blaze of Gospel day.'

I think I need not tell you that I am very unhappy; you know that already; but I do want to be more earnest about the salvation of my soul. I feel it is a matter of great importance, and I long to realise my sins forgiven; but my heart seems so hard, I feel so bound down, such a deadness of soul as it were, that it seems as if I cannot make the effort to be free. Oh, I have sinned against so much light; I have sat under the sound of the truth so long, I have listened to so many invitations of mercy, I have had so many privileges, so much kindness shown me by God's people, and you especially; you could not have done more for me than you have done, and yet, after all, I am further off being a Christian than ever. Dear Miss ——, I am a great sinner,

but I do want to feel more sorry for my sins; for you know that before I can exercise faith in Jesus, I must experience that 'godly sorrow that worketh repentance.' I feel that it is more the *punishment* of sin that I dread than *the sin itself*. I do pray that the Lord would look in pity upon me, and soften my hard heart, and bring me to Himself. I feel that I cannot go on like this much longer. You have prayed much for me, and I sometimes think your many prayers for me will be answered, for the 'prayer of the righteous availeth much.' I have much more I should like to say, but I am expecting Fanny to call for me to go to the prayer-meeting."

But now, notwithstanding the hopes again raised by the foregoing letter, I have to add, to my deep sorrow of heart, that my young friend came out of the Slough of Despond on the wrong side, and went back to the City of Destruction. Her home hindrances were many, and at length she gave in to the temptations of the enemy, and severed herself from our Christian fellowship.

Her life's history is not yet completed. At the present time, her soul's welfare is as much the object of my concern as it ever was. Now and then I have an opportunity of saying a word for Jesus, of urging the claims of a loving Saviour; but the reply is generally, "It is of no use; I *have* procrastinated too long."

Very occasionally L. A. comes in on Sunday afternoons to our Bible readings, but is sure to leave without speaking to any one. Have I lost hope? I think not. My faith clings to the promises of God, and I still plead for her. I know the Spirit strives, and I believe that I shall yet have to rejoice over L. A. as a trophy of redeeming grace. "Lord, increase my faith."

CHAPTER X.

THE THREE SISTERS.

I HAVE very pleasing recollections of three sisters, who were, one after the other, in my class. The first, Ellen, came to me when I had an ordinary Bible class in the school-room. She was then thirteen years of age, rather blunt in her manner of speaking, but possessing a straightforward truthfulness calculated to command respect. For the first two or three weeks I feared that her frivolity and general inattention would be a great hindrance; but by exercising a little patience, and by being careful to reprove only when absolutely necessary (and then with very great tenderness, for she was very sensitive), these faults were soon overcome: she was led not only to "approve the right," but to pursue it. Gradually, too, her manner, which had so pained me on her admission into the school, softened, and so gentle did she become that you would not have known her for the same girl. Whether the work of grace was begun then I have no means of knowing; but I like to believe it was so, and to *look forward* to meeting her by-and-by in the *land of* the blest.

I know but little of her history. She went early to service, and when she had a holiday came to see me; but I had no reason then to think that the saving change had been wrought. Our last interview was on one Sunday afternoon, nearly two years after my adult class was formed. She came with a sister who then belonged to that class. At the close of our Bible lesson she informed me that the next week she was to sail for Australia. I had only time to commend her to God in prayer, and give her a last earnest, pressing invitation to the loving Saviour. I knew the good seed had been sown, and I trusted it would be proved that it had taken root.

Once only did I hear from her. It was a brief note, written on New Year's Day, during her passage out; but I was glad to get it and extract what encouragement I could from it.

"DEAR TEACHER,—I can but think of you all on Sunday afternoons; I wish I could see you, and join the class. Thank you for teaching me to love my Bible; it is a great treasure to me here. I am obliged to be very close, and keep myself to myself, for on board ship there are many dangers and temptations, and some very rough company. I hope you will pray for me, that God may guide and direct me in the right way. Dear teacher, do not fail to write me a very long letter."

Such was Ellen's note, and it was the only direct communication I had from her. Her sis-

ters occasionally conveyed a message to me; but while I have no positive assurance of her conversion, I yet hope and believe that it will be my privilege in "the happy land, far, far away," to recognise Ellen, and hear the story of grace as manifested towards her.

Rachel was the next, and in all respects was different from her sister. She was with me when I was first induced to form an adult class. Though serious and attentive, there was not at that time any reason to suppose that she was seeking an interest in the atoning blood of Christ; but yet I was much encouraged about her. My class was not then very large, but the seven or eight girls who came were all so loving in their manner, so very devout during prayer, and so interested in reading the Word of God, that my heart was frequently filled with joy at the favourable signs manifested, and I pleaded earnestly with God in prayer that they might be won for Jesus.

Rachel left for service in a village a few miles distant from our town, and soon after she was gone, I wrote to her and gave her another invitation to the cross of Calvary. The following letter was the reply received:—

"Dear Teacher,—Thank you for your kind counsel. How I wish I could say that I am a child of God. I have tried again and again to *come to* the feet of Jesus, and have prayed that *my sins* may be forgiven. I feel indeed that I

am a miserable, guilty sinner; I must be born again. Dear teacher, I will try at once and rest on the precious Lamb. Oh, that this may be a New Year indeed to me.

"When I try to pray, Satan comes and tells me, It is no use to-day; you have something else to do; and then I put it off till another time. Will you pray that I may keep the resolution made this New Year's Day, that by God's grace assisting I will serve Him?"

This led us as a class to make earnest and special prayer for our young friend; so fearful was I that, in the midst of what appeared adverse circumstances, Rachel might lose the impressions made on her heart. Had the work been *mine*, certainly this would have been the result; but the Holy Spirit of God began, and, according to His promise, He would carry on the work.

The next letter spoke of deepened convictions, of earnest wrestlings in prayer, of sleepless nights, and a determination not to rest until the mercy sought had been obtained.

During the interval between the receipt of the letters, God had graciously revealed Himself to some of our number as the God who pardoneth iniquity, and these forgiven ones had writtten to Rachel. Consequently she wrote to me, saying:—

"Oh, if I could only be as my dear sister Fanny, and my young friends Julia and Ruth. *Why, teacher,* they are all rejoicing in their

Saviour, and I, poor I, am left outside. My dear sister often writes, begging me to cast my sins on Jesus, and I have wept and prayed, but all in vain. Do you think it is because I have resisted the Spirit of God? Dearest teacher, I cannot think of any words to pray in but, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' Please take this letter to the class with you, and beg all my old schoolfellows to pray that I may believe in Jesus who died for me."

Soon after this we had the pleasure of a visit from Rachel. She was with us one Sunday afternoon, and again on the Wednesday evening, when we assembled for prayer. At that meeting we had many cheering indications that the Lord was amongst us; and as one after another offered their simple and earnest petitions for our friend, she became thoroughly broken down before God, and then in self-despair cast herself wholly on the mercy of God in Christ. She shall describe the change in her own words:—

"I know you are greatly rejoiced that I am at last at peace with God. What a rebel I have been! what an unworthy sinner! And yet now, through the precious blood of Christ, my guilty soul is made white and clean. I feel I cannot be thankful enough. In great mercy God has *turned* the great darkness into marvellous light. *I cannot tell how, but, oh,* I feel it.

"Since last Sabbath I have been much cast down. Satan seemed so strong within me, almost driving me from the mercy-seat; and when I tried to pray, my heart seemed harder than ever, and my thoughts would wander. But when we came to your house on Wednesday, Fanny said, 'We shall have a good meeting to-night, and *you* will be saved. I have been pleading for it, and I believe it.' I did not answer her; but immediately when I entered the room I thought, 'This is the gate of heaven.' What followed you know. I believed, and

> 'He owned me for His child,
> I could no longer fear.'

"And now, dear teacher, pray that I may live near to Jesus, and be ever trying to win some other poor sinner to Jesus. I wish I could be with you this evening; I know you will be praising God for me. How truly thankful I am that I ever joined your Bible class, and learned so much about the Word of God. Things you have said come back to me often. God bless you, and give you a bountiful measure of grace, that many more wandering souls may be brought to believe on Jesus."

I must bring my story to an end, for I have yet to speak of another sister. Suffice it to say that Rachel went on her way humbly. She was often *cast down,* for she had many difficulties; yet,

trusting in the merits of Christ, her language was generally—

"I the chief of sinners am;
But Jesus died for me."

Rachel is now married, and has one dear little girl, whom I trust she and her husband are training in "the way she should go."

Fanny became a member of the Bible class before Rachel left it, and very soon gave evidence of an intense desire to be a Christian. She was young and timid, but so consistent in her conduct and deportment, that she was an example to all, and all seemed to feel her quiet influence.

It was a happy Sabbath afternoon when Fanny, sobbing on my shoulder, told me that she had made up her mind to love Jesus. The work of grace was carried on gently and quietly; there were no loud demonstrations of joy, no periodical excitement, but very evident was it that Fanny lived near the Cross. Her very countenance told of the peace within. She remained with us two or three years, during which time she was made useful to some of her class-mates, and often brought into the class some young women whom she had invited to accompany her. When she left us there was much genuine sorrow expressed, and much anxiety manifested that we should hear from her occasionally. In her first letter to me she wrote as follows:—

"*I did* not think it would be so hard to leave *all my* dear class-mates. Will you give my love

to them, and tell them I pray they may be willing to be washed in the 'blood of the Lamb.' I told them when they had given their hearts to God to write and tell me; you would give them my address. O dear teacher, I am thankful that ever I sat under your instructions, and that I was led to 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' I find there are many snares laid for inexperienced believers. I did not feel it so much at home, but here Satan is very busy. Do pray for me, that I may be kept from the evil that is in the world. Thank God, He that is for me is more than all that can be against me.

"I wish often I was amongst you on Sunday afternoons. But I must not murmur at my lot; I have much to be thankful for. My fellow-servant is a nice, good girl, and I tell her all about our loving little band; and if you will not think it a liberty she will call on you when in the town. She would like to see you; and I told her you would be sure to speak to her about Jesus. With much love to all the girls, I am, dear teacher, your grateful and affectionate pupil."

Some time after this, Fanny wrote me requesting me to visit her sister Rachel, who had been taken home ill, and had no opportunity of letting me know. As speedily as possible I complied with the request, and spent a very happy

hour with the invalid, who was rejoicing in God her Saviour. F.'s next note spoke of the probability that she might again be with us:—

"My mistress has engaged a German nurse, so I shall not be required here much longer. I am sorry to leave the dear children, but I do anticipate sitting in my old corner once more. Do you think they will make way for me? It will be rather selfish of me, perhaps, but I fancy I should feel more at home in that corner, which I call my Bethel corner, for often the Lord has blessed me there. I have much missed the means of grace, and long for the privilege of listening to a gospel sermon. I am sorry to hear of poor Lizzie's illness, but I trust the soul's sickness has been healed, and that she has a clear view of Jesus crucified."

It did not happen as Fanny expected, for her mistress requested her to stay with them a few weeks, and accompany them to the sea-side. This of course delayed her visit to us, and we were all feeling much disappointed; but on the day we might have welcomed her we received a letter instead.

"I have been very busy and unsettled lately, so could not write to all the dear girls. We have now been at B. a week, and I like the place very *well.* I am out nearly all day, and while the *children* are playing on the sands, I and my

mistress sit down and read. My little Bible seems to have something in it suitable for all seasons and places.

"One of the little ones came to me the other day and said, 'Nurse, read a verse from your book about the sea.'

"I read, 'They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these men see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.'

"The child ran away, and mistress said, 'I shall always esteem you, nurse, for teaching my children to love the Bible.'

"I was so thankful and encouraged, for I had often feared she was not pleased about it. Dear teacher, the happy hours *we* have spent together are gone for ever, but the results remain. I often recall the time when the Lord called me to seek His face, and my heart replied, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' My heart overflows with gratitude to Him who so graciously led me in the way of truth. Do pray that I may be kept close to my Saviour's bleeding side, for this truly is

> 'All my hope and all my plea,
> For me the Saviour died.'

Tell the dear girls they will never regret gathering together to read God's Word. I hope they are all now brought into the fold of the Good Shepherd, and if we never meet on earth, we shall have a meeting in heaven, and 'what must *it be to be there*?'"

Upon Fanny's return from the sea-side she remained some weeks at home, and Sabbath after Sabbath she occupied her old corner. Occasionally she was requested to go into the school-room, to take the class of some absent teacher, but she did not thoroughly enter into the work of teaching at that time. "I have," she would say, "so much to learn, and my opportunities are flying."

But I must bring this sketch to a close, which I will do with an extract from a letter written after a severe illness:—

"My dearest Teacher,—By the grace of God, I am fixed on the Rock, Christ Jesus. By the mercy of God my health is being restored, and I hope to return home stronger than I have been some time. On Thursday evening Miss Marsh came down here, and gave a most beautiful address from Numbers xxi. 5-10, Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness. On the Sunday afternoon I went with my uncle to hear Dr. Marsh, and he preached beautifully from 'The eternal God is thy refuge;' and in the evening Miss Marsh spoke in the school-room, from the third chapter of Romans. I enjoyed all the services so much, and was so much blessed and profited. Oh, what a blessing it is to be a child of God, to know that we are accepted through and in Christ Jesus.

'If all the world my Saviour knew,
Sure all the world would love Him too.'

I do pray for you all very much, and ask that all the dear girls may be brought to the knowledge of their Saviour. You must, dear teacher, give my fondest love to them, and tell them from me not to put off any longer seeking for the pardon of their sins. We know not what a day may bring forth, and I am sure it is easier to begin early than late in life, for the longer we live in sin the harder our hearts become; and after all, there is more happiness in the love of Jesus than in the love of the world. I often, often sing—

'O happy day, that fixed my choice.'

And it was a happy day, too! And I have been happy ever since, and I expect to be happy in Jesus, however rough the wilderness path. The last Bible lesson I heard you give was from the Twenty-third Psalm, and it is such a treasure to me."

But the time came when Fanny's connection with us as a class was entirely broken off. Distance and time worked their usual changes, and the young people she knew were all gone,—their places being filled up by those who were strangers to her. Nevertheless, Fanny is still to me a dear Christian friend. Hitherto her life has been such as its early promise indicated, one of quiet, holy influence, and by-and-by it will be made manifest that "she hath done what she could."

CHAPTER XI.

FOUND OF JESUS.

Only for a few brief weeks was Sybella M—— associated with us in our Biblec lass; but that period formed an era in her life's history to which she always referred with grateful joy. Our acquaintance began quite informally. I was walking to our usual place of meeting when I noticed a young girl loitering near the Post Office. There was something in her features that attracted me, and in passing I looked at her earnestly. The thought occurred, how sad it was that apparently a respectable young girl should be so courting notice, and running heedlessly into temptation. Then conscience asked, "What are are you doing to save her?" Immediately I turned back to speak to her, but to my surprise she was quite close to me. At once I said, "We are strangers to each other, but I felt so anxious about you, that I was coming back to invite you *to* come with me to the Sunday-school."

"Thank you, Miss," she replied, smilingly. "I noticed your Bible in your hand, and I meant to find out where you were going, because I have seen you before."

We were now walking side by side, and I remarked, "I am glad I thought to ask you to come, for I think you will like it."

"I don't know," she said. "I am too old for a scholar, and not good enough for a teacher."

"You are not too old, I think. I have a class of young women, and we will all try to make you feel at home."

By this time we had reached the chapel, and we entered *together*. I was truly thankful for the easy success I had, and prayed that the girl might not be drawn away as easily as she had been drawn into our little company. Being always nervous and timid when a stranger was present, I scarcely saw whether or not there was interested attention, but was disappointed when I found that before we were fairly off our knees at the close of the meeting, she was gone. I regretted much that I neither knew her name nor address, but now I could only wait, watch, and pray. During the ensuing week the girl was seldom out of my thoughts, and on the next Sabbath afternoon my heart filled with gratitude as I saw she was waiting in the same spot as on the previous Sunday. She came quickly towards

me and said, "Here I am again, Miss; I thought you would let me go in with you."

I expressed my pleasure at seeing her, and remarked that I had omitted to take her name and address.

"My name," she said, "is Sybella M——; never mind the address, because you must never come there."

I had learned by experience that such questions were better not pressed at such an early stage of our acquaintance, so determined to wait for further information till she gave it voluntarily. I would at all events gain her affections before I sought her confidence. It was six weeks before I had an opportunity of ascertaining how Sybella was affected towards our Lord Jesus Christ. I had observed her interest in our lessons, but she continued to leave the class quietly and quickly, and no one succeeded in detaining her. On the seventh Sunday I found her waiting near the door of my own home.

"I do so want to speak to you, Miss," she said.

"Well, my dear," I replied, "will you come in? or shall I walk with you a little way?"

"If you don't mind coming into the fields, teacher, I should be so much obliged."

So into the fields we went, and for a few minutes we were silent. Then, finding the girl did not attempt to speak, I asked—

"*Did* you want to tell me what Jesus had done *for your soul*?"

She started, and looking earnestly at me, said, "He has not done anything for me yet; I have only just begun to ask Him."

"Ah, Sybella!" I replied, "He did not wait for that; He did it all long, long ago."

"All what, teacher?"

"All that was necessary for your redemption and salvation; surely you know what?"

"Yes," she said, thoughtfully, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

"And did He go back without doing it?" I asked, "or has He fully accomplished the gracious work?"

"I suppose He did do it, teacher; for when He was on the cross He cried, 'It is finished,' and He must have referred to His work."

"And how was it that He died the death of a malefactor?" I asked.

"I think I know, Miss. This afternoon we had that explained; it was what you called substitution; and we sang, too,

'He died to atone
For sins not His own;
Your debt He hath paid, and your work He hath done.'"

"Yes, Sybella, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him

the iniquity of us all.' Can you still say He has done nothing for you *yet?*"

"I see what you mean, I think. The Saviour of sinners will never die again;" and she heaved a deep sigh.

"You would not surely wish it, Sybella," I said. "The sacrifice which satisfied Divine justice will surely satisfy you."

"I don't wish Christ to suffer again," she replied; "but, Miss, I want to be satisfied that He will save me, that He does save me."

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ——"

She interrupted me by saying, "'And thou shalt be saved.' Yes, I know, dear teacher; but what is believing? Dear me! I must run home as fast as I can. Do you think I can believe?"

"Yes, indeed, you may trust all God's promises fully and thoroughly."

Hastily the girl ran off, and for days I troubled myself by thinking how little I had said to her; how much more plainly I might have put before her the way of salvation through Jesus only; and I mourned before God that I was so insufficient for these things. But most graciously He manifested His all-sufficiency, and again I gladly and gratefully acknowledged that the excellency of the power was of God, and not of man.

Sybella met me on the following Sabbath with much affectionate warmth.

"Dear teacher," she said, "I am so changed;

Jesus is everything to me now; the Holy Spirit, I believe, has taught me to trust myself to Jesus. I don't know how to tell you, teacher, but I am happier than ever I was in my life; I am ashamed of having sinned so long and so hard. How it was possible for Jesus to love me I can't think; but *He did* and *He does*, and that makes me glad."

Wishing to test the foundation of her hope, I asked, "But what about your sins, Sybella? Will they not separate between you and God?"

"You know," she said, "the iniquity of my sin *was laid upon Him.*"

We were now entering the chapel, so I only answered by repeating the words, "*Herein is love*, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

From that Sabbath my young friend was bright and happy, and by degrees became more communicative. Her mother had for some years been a Christian, but, said Sybella, "Four years ago she died, and on her dying bed she begged me to seek the Lord while He might be found. Many nice words she said, Miss, which I thought of a long while, but after a time I let them slip, and went in a bad way, for I had nobody to help me in doing right. When you asked me to the Sunday-school, it brought old times to my memory. I used to go to one when we lived in N——, but after we came up here we were never *settled.*"

"Are you settled now, do you think?"

"I'm afraid not; father has no regular place, and likes moving about; we may soon go away again. I had only been in C—— two Sundays before you saw me. I think the Lord guided us here."

"What a mercy it is that your dear mother's prayers for you are answered, and that you have heard and attended to the voice of the Shepherd Jesus."

That was our last conversation. The next Sabbath my young friend was absent, and some days afterwards I received a few affectionate lines dated from a distant town. They were as follows:—

"Dear Miss ——,

"I did not expect to go away without any notice, but I had to. Will you pray for my father? I must not say anything about him but this, *he is not saved.* O, teacher! I can't say anything that gives me greater pain, but *I hope;* for Jesus died for him and me. Do you remember when I said, 'He has not done anything for me yet?' How ignorant I was! I thank God, who put it into your mind to speak to me, and I thank Him for leading me to just that place to stand. I was so dull, and wanted somebody, and the little inward voice said, 'Follow that lady.' I *can only* say I am now a follower of Jesus, and

I love Him, and hope you and me, and my dear mother and poor father, may all meet in glory.

"Your grateful scholar,

"S. M——."

It was quite two years before I again heard anything of Sybella M——. Then I met with her near the old spot, but she was accompanied by a relative who professed to be in great haste, and I had only time to learn that she was walking in the light. "That was the place where I stood, teacher," she said; "I can see it all now.

'O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be.'"

I scarcely knew what to say, our interview was so brief, but as I held her hand in mine she said, "Give me a text, please, and then I will run and catch aunt." I repeated what the Lord gave me: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

We parted, to meet again, I trust, where

"We shall see His face,
And never, never sin;
But from the rivers of His grace
Drink endless pleasures in."

CHAPTER XII.

FROM SELF TO CHRIST.

Emma C. was a quiet steady child when she was first under my care. I remember her when I had what was called the second Testament class. She went with me to the higher Testament class, then to the Bible class, and after that, when the adult class was formed, she was one of the four senior girls who accompanied me. Always attentive and diligent, affectionate and docile, she seemed just one of those girls who, if we were not told that "all had sinned," we might imagine needed no conversion.

But, bless God! His Spirit convinces of sin, and that Spirit graciously convinced my young friend of her personal guilt, and therefore of her need of a Saviour. As with many of our young people, so with Emma, I did not know what was passing in her mind until she left us; but her letters soon satisfied me that a work of grace had really begun. Her first note was of a general *character*:—

"Knowing," she said, "you have my spiritual welfare at heart, I feel lost for words to express the sentiments of my mind. I pray for the grace of God, which is sufficient to guide and teach me in all things. I often think of you, though far from me, and of the many happy Sabbaths we have spent reading God's Word and singing hymns of praise, and I hope we shall thus spend many more."

A fortnight after I received another brief note, an extract from which will show how God was working with her:—

"It was with pleasure that I received your kind and instructive letter, and I hope, by God's assistance and His Holy Spirit, the impressions I have received will be stamped on my heart. I know if I pray God will give me a new heart; He is able and willing to do it for the sake of Christ. I have such a gracious Saviour, I will pray for grace to love and serve Him."

I obtained nothing more definite for six months. Emma was living in a pious family, and I knew that the examples she had before her were such as would lead her to consider the religion of Jesus Christ a very lovely thing, and I believed the Spirit of God would carry on the work begun. The very few lines that gave token of a deeper concern were as follow:—

"I have not had much time, but I assure you you are seldom out of my thoughts. I am very comfortable, and like Mrs. —— very much. I am rather lonely when in the house by myself, but I go to chapel on Sunday afternoons. I often think of the kind advice you have given me; but I am sorry to say I must acknowledge I have not yet taken the first step you talk of, 'Out of self.' But how difficult! When I try to pray, Satan comes and tempts me, and I do not always resist temptation; but by the grace of God I will not rest until I am able to say from experience, 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin.'"

Again six months passed away. Emma remained in her situation, was much respected, and to all appearance was living a consistent Christian life, but she had not yet given herself to Christ. About that time she wrote:—

"I most sincerely thank you for your kind instructions and your prayers. I hope they will be answered, and that your labour will not be spent in vain, but abundantly blessed. I know, dear teacher, that you love me, and I love you very much. I know your desire for me is that I may be saved. But I am still a guilty sinner, not having yet tasted of the pardoning love and *mercy* of the Redeemer. I sometimes feel myself

too guilty to be pardoned; but I look at the gracious promises, and there find there is forgiveness for all who come to Jesus. I want to cast my burden at the foot of the cross.

"I am to come home on Saturday, and stay till Monday, so I hope to come to the Bible class on Sunday."

Emma came as expected, and again occupied her seat in the class. Afterwards she went home with me, and we had a little conversation on the way of salvation through faith in Christ. Our parting was likely to be for a long season, for she was going far away with the family in whose service she lived, so that her holidays could not be frequent. But to no place is the Saviour's love restricted, and what Emma never realised in the south she was graciously enabled to realise in the north. Her first letter from her new home bore marks of earnest decision.

"I am determined, through grace, to be on the Lord's side. I will pray more earnestly, and believe God will give me a new heart, and pardon my sins, and make me His child. You said in your note, it would be of great benefit to me to meet in a class; I think I should like it, but I have not much idea what it is. Mrs. D. asked me once if I should like to do so. I said, Yes; and she promised to see about it. I go to

Sunday-school in the afternoon, and have a class of little boys to teach. I wish you all a happy New Year."

After I received this note Emma again removed with her kind master and mistress; and the first communication received from their new residence contained the following:—

"I have not forgotten you, but think of you all every day, and remember you all at a throne of grace. I am much obliged to you for speaking to Mrs. D. about my class. Since we have been here I have met, and like it very much; indeed, I sometimes feel it to be very good. . . . I sometimes feel very happy, and believe I have found the Pearl of Great Price; and yet, when trial and temptation come, I doubt if I have any religion at all, and great darkness covers my mind. May the Lord enable me to believe more, and not to rest, until I have a clear witness within that I am His."

When it is remembered that I had a large number of young people with whom I wished to correspond occasionally, no surprise will be felt that the letters referred to are sometimes very far apart. *My rule was to try to write to each twice a year.* In some special cases my letters have been sent more frequently, but only when *there* seemed an urgent necessity to give in-

struction or comfort. Hence there was an interval of many months after the last letter given from Emma C. The only record I have is in my Bible-class book, where I find this memorandum:—

"*August 12th.*—Emma C. joined us, being home for a holiday. She is walking in the path of life, and enjoys peace in believing. May the Lord keep her by His grace!"

In her next letter Emma says:—

"You will think I am a long time before I write to tell you how I got back. We had a rough passage. . . . . Please accept my thanks for the nice little book you sent me. I did not know you had sent it, or would have thanked you when I called to bid you good-bye. It was a great pleasure to me to visit the class again; I enjoyed it very much, and was not a little profited by it. I feel I still need your counsels and prayers, which I am sure you will not deny me. I often fear I am not adapted for a teacher; it is, indeed, a responsible office to have souls committed to my care, but by the grace of God I am enabled to take up my cross. I am thankful for the love I have for Jesus, and especially when I think I love because He first loved me. I expect, all well, to see you soon, as my mother can no longer do without me at home."

My next memorandum is six weeks later, and is contained in my class-book. I find there written:—

"Emma has left her situation, and is again amongst us; may the Lord make her a shining light."

Only for two or three months did Emma occupy her old position, for more labourers were required in the Sabbath-school, and she (with two more members of the class) was recommended as a teacher. My next and last record is:—

"Emma is chosen as teacher for a Testament class; may she be earnest and faithful."

There I must leave her, for there she still labours. Our interviews are frequent; she continues a consistent follower of Jesus, and a steadfast labourer in His vineyard.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

ONLY for a few months did we enjoy the companionship of Emily A., but while she was with us we learned to esteem and love her. Of a quiet and modest disposition, very neat in her style of dress, and of pleasant countenance, she very quickly obtained the confidence and friendship of her class-mates. Her serious attention to the Word of God was gratifying, and often excited pleasing hopes that the Lord was graciously causing the seed to take root in her heart, and that—

> "Watered from on high,
> The seed would surely grow."

Very soon after the pain of parting had been gone through, I received a letter from her which at once satisfied me that the Lord had answered prayer. She wrote to me, saying—

"I was so very glad, dear teacher, to receive your kind letter, and especially to hear that the

work of grace was spreading in the class. How much I long to be one amongst you! Do still pray for me, and ask all the dear girls to pray for me also, for I feel I am a wretched sinner. But I have cried to God for mercy, and asked Him to wash me in the precious blood of Christ, and own me as His child. I do feel what an awful thing it would be, after the many privileges I have had of hearing and learning the way of salvation, if I should be found at last on the left hand!

"Dear teacher, there is not a day passes but what I think of you, and all my dear friends, especially on Sundays. I long to be able again to spend a few happy hours with you, but I must wait patiently till the proper time for a holiday. I have a very comfortable situation, and am able to get to chapel twice of a Sunday. We have family prayers night and morning, but Mrs. N. does not read to us, as I expected. It seems it is only in the winter she does this; but she lends us books, and I think they are what you would approve. My brother writes to me often. I think he has given his heart to God since I came away, his letters are such a comfort."

The work of grace thus commenced was quietly and surely carried on, and the salvation of Emily A. was for many weeks the burden of our prayer whenever we met.

Those days of earnest longing for sinners to be saved often recur to me. What anxiety was manifested! What tender regard for the welfare of souls! How eagerly every saved member of the class endeavoured to win the unsaved for Jesus! I would it were always so!

My next letter from Emily was the first intimation I had that her late class-mates had been following up my invitations with their own loving pleadings, for she thus wrote:—

"Give my love to all the dear girls who have written to me so kindly. I wish I could answer them all, but I have not time. How delightful that so many of them should have found mercy in the blood of the Lamb! I cannot think how it is that my heart is so hard, and I cannot give it up to Jesus! I want to do so, and will never rest till I feel my sins forgiven.

"Although I had to leave all my dear companions, I have found one of my fellow-servants who is a Christian, and we have time to read and talk on Sundays. She is a member of the Church of England, and has an excellent minister, who cares for his flock. I have been with her lately to church, for I feel so strange in a London chapel; Hinde Street is only ten minutes' walk from our house, *but I am alone there.*"

I received the following communication from Emily on my birthday:—

"Many happy returns of the day, dear teacher! This birthday will be the happiest the dear girls have known, for since your last how many of them have found forgiveness in Jesus' blood! I think they will be talking about it, and if I were with you I too should be able to say I have found the simple way of salvation, and wonder I did not see it before. The love of Jesus is very precious to me, and I hope to be kept closely to the cross of Calvary. I can say with joy—

> 'Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it,
> Seal it from Thy courts above.'

"How sorry I am for Lizzie. She must have forgotten that God's eye could see her heart; and that however much she might succeed in deceiving you, she could never deceive Him. But don't let us give up praying for her; I shall ask that the Lord would show her her sinfulness."

From this time Emily wrote in a happy state of mind, always expressing an interest in the welfare of the young people she knew, occasionally enclosing a note for some one of the number, and looking for a reply. Many items of intelligence were thus imparted to her, causing her to retain a feeling of oneness with us,—a feeling I think it always desirable to encourage, however distant those who have left us may be. Thus too the class, as a class, was in her affections, not simply those who were contemporary with her, but also

those who had since joined us. An extract from another letter will show the amount of interest she felt in our prosperity :—

"We came to London last week, and I was pleased to find a letter from you, and one from Martha. Dear teacher, I thank God He has found out Ellen, and saved her. I did not know her, but my sister went to Sunday-school with her. It must be nice to be in your meetings now, when so many have given their hearts to God. Give my love to all, and tell Ellen that when I first believed in Jesus, Satan tempted me very much, and *I found nothing would do but to keep casting my soul on the atoning blood; it did not do to lose sight of it a moment.*

"My mistress has begun to have us in to read to us, and I like it so much; she puts me in mind of you when she is talking to us; and I assure you I now have happier Sunday evenings than I have had before since I left home."

So our intercourse continued, Emily growing in grace, and enjoying the favour of God, and of all who knew her. But my heart's desire was to get her into Christian fellowship. However, no opportunity offered until, requiring a more lucrative situation, she left London for a country home. After her arrival there she wrote as follows :—

"Dear Teacher, — How much I prefer the

country to the town; and one great thing is, that now I and my sister can attend a Wesleyan chapel, and the privileges I enjoy have been the means of bringing me nearer to Jesus. I have had the happiness of hearing a poor sinner crying for mercy. . . . .

"I have done as you wished me, and been to class. I like it middling, perhaps shall like it better when I have been again; for, as you say in yours, it is a good thing to give our hands to God's people. I often wish I had known and loved Jesus when I was with you; but you see I had to leave all of you before I found Jesus. I remember how I used to resist the strivings of God's Spirit when you were talking to us and praying for us, and all the time I longed to be a Christian.

"I suppose there is no one in your class now who was there with me. Oh yes, I remember two are still with you. Give my love to them specially, but to the others as well. Could I come over, dear teacher, I should want to entreat the fresh scholars to come at once to the Saviour. God bless you all!"

Having brought Emily to this important point in her history, we must take leave of her. She holds on her way; she loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and seeks His glory; she loves God's people, and rejoices to tell to others the wonders of redeeming grace.

CHAPTER XIV.

SIMPLE FAITH.

"I HAVE been speaking to a young girl who lives just below us, and inviting her to your Bible class."

So said a dear friend when I one day called upon her. Of course I promised to welcome her, and hoped she would derive both pleasure and profit from her attendance. The class for adults had not long been in existence, and with the addition of Hannah O. we numbered only eight.

There was something very attractive in the girl's countenance; it was so bright and good tempered, one could not but look at it. Her manners were awkward; there was a certain bluntness about her, so that one or two of our little class rather shrank from intimate association with her. Happily Hannah was quite unconscious of the feeling that her first appearance excited, and so thoroughly hearty was she, that in spite of the disadvantages under which she had previously laboured, she speedily became a favourite. Ever ready to perform a kind action, to take the lowest place or the highest, as her

class-mates wished, to run here or there as seemed likely to please, none could help welcoming Hannah when she came, or missing her when she stayed away.

Many months passed away before I had any reason to believe that the Word had laid hold upon her heart. Her enjoyment of our meetings seemed to increase, and her attendance was punctual. She often came in with her offering of beautiful flowers, which were quietly laid on the table beside me, cheering me by their beauty and fragrance, and sometimes serving to illustrate our lessons.

One day I was informed that a lady was inquiring if she could have a few minutes' private conversation with me, and on referring to the card I found it was Hannah's mistress. I was rather nervous, the lady being a stranger to me; but her gentle manners soon set me at ease, and when she told her errand I was indeed grateful.

"Many Sabbath-school teachers," she said, "labour year after year, and see nothing to cheer them in their work, and thinking it might be so with you with respect to Hannah, I have come to tell you that I believe that the Holy Spirit has applied the truth to her conscience, and that she is endeavouring to walk according to the Word of God. Formerly she was hasty and pert; now, if the hasty expression is coming, it is checked with 'Oh, no; I beg your pardon, ma'am!' In

the evening her Bible is her constant study, and as she and I are often alone in the house, I encourage her to tell me what she can remember of lessons or sermons."

Much more my visitor told me, which pleased me greatly, and caused me to "thank God and take courage." I have often recalled the thoughtful kindness of that lady. She was a sweet Christian, passing through much affliction and trial, but exemplifying in her life the power of Divine grace. This interview was the beginning of a close and intimate friendship between us, which is now only suspended for a season, for the ripe believer was "caught into eternity" about two years after I first knew her. By-and-by we shall renew our friendship.

When, after the above conversation with her mistress, I took the opportunity of talking closely with Hannah, I was glad to find she was earnestly seeking for the mercy of God through Christ, and I directed her gladly to the free and open way, A few days afterwards she wrote me saying:—

"I am so glad you have broken the ice for me; now I can tell you all about my feelings. I have not found Jesus. All, all is darkness; not one glimmer of light! I feel my need of Jesus more than ever I did. Jane said to me on Sunday, 'But you must love Jesus.' It is no use to talk to me about love; I try to love Jesus, but that

gives me no comfort. I have not peace now, and do not desire it excepting in Jesus. I need not ask you to remember me at the throne of grace; you will do so. I dread lest I should again sink into indifference. I would rather be as I am than have no care at all."

The work of conviction was very deep, and Hannah was a long time in distress. Three months after the first letter she wrote again :—

"Since I saw you I have felt greatly relieved; the way of salvation seems more clearly before me. I can see the way, but that is not enough to make one happy. I must know that my sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, and that I am washed in His most precious blood. I know and feel that the fault is not in Jesus; it must be all in me. And since I have felt sure of that, there is really love for Jesus in my heart—only a spark, but it will burn on."

Shortly after this I had occasion to praise God on receiving another letter, which was as follows :—

"Dear Teacher,—I am longing to tell you what the Lord has done for my soul. I knew you would be glad of these few lines, as I had no opportunity of speaking to you on Tuesday. I heard you were too ill to meet the class, so I went *home* again.

"I have thought so much of what you said on Sunday, and I have come to Jesus by simple faith, and He has received me. Many times during the day I am tempted to think I am not the Lord's, that I am not living holy enough, that I have no right to consider myself a disciple of Jesus; but I mean, by God's grace, to cling fast to my hope, for it is only this, 'Jesus died for me.' I am very weak, but I can trust a Strong One.

"And now, dear teacher, I am longing for Mary. She has been mourning a long time, but I now know that *mourning will never save her.* I have sent her word what the Lord has done for me.

"Dear friend, do not fear; *your class will prosper*, and we shall all be travelling hand in hand to Immanuel's land."

The remainder of Hannah's history up to the present time has been a remarkable one, but the circumstances are all too new to be alluded to here. She was with her mistress in her last moments; she went to reside with that lady's father, and was with him until he too was taken home to glory. From that time poor Hannah has had much sorrow; but in trial and suffering, in sorrow and anxiety, I believe she has never lost her trust in Jesus, and in "evil and good report" has alike been able to "rejoice in the Lord."

CHAPTER XV.

MARRYING IN THE LORD.

MANY years ago I had my attention drawn by one of our ministers to the subject of the marriages formed by our young people. He then remarked that numbers of scholars who had been to all appearance truly converted, and bade fair to become useful in the Church of Christ, were lost to us, and possibly irrecoverably lost, because they contracted ungodly unions.

I had only just begun the class for adults, and the good man said, "If you prove a teacher suitable for your position, you will often be consulted in such matters, and, whatever you do, *never in any way hesitate in your condemnation of the union of believers with unbelievers.*"

Since that time I have had some experience in these things. My advice has often been sought. Sometimes, thank God! it has been followed; at other times, alas! it has been totally disregarded. And now, after the lapse of time, I quite believe, with my ministerial friend, that these unions are a fruitful source of backslidings, and always bring

unhappiness to the child of God. I could give several cases in illustration of this sad truth, but one will be quite sufficient.

When Lizzie W. first came to the Bible class she was a bright, happy girl, neat in dress, modest in deportment, respectful in language, and altogether just the kind of person a Christian lady would choose for a nurse. This position was the one she filled, with credit to herself and satisfaction to her employers.

Very much did she enjoy our Bible readings, and one day remarked, "I always love my Bible, and believed what I was taught, that it was the best Book; but since I came here I have fully entered into the spirit of the hymn—

> 'Holy Bible! Book divine!
> Precious treasure, thou art mine!' &c.

Often when I am busy, I am thinking of what I have heard and read, and I know something of David's feeling when he said, 'Oh, how I love Thy law; it is my meditation all the day.'"

And so Lizzie appeared to be growing in grace, and likely to be useful in bringing others to Jesus. One Sunday evening, as I was walking down our chapel yard, my young friend stepped up to me, saying,—

"Teacher, may I introduce William to you?"

"Oh, yes," I replied; "but who is William?"

I turned and held out my hand to a respectable

young man who was now by Lizzie's side. He appeared embarrassed, and I tried by a few kind words to put him at ease, but that was all there was time for.

It was some weeks before an opportunity occurred of asking, "Lizzie, who is William?"

"The young man I am engaged to," she answered.

"How long have you been engaged?"

"A very long time, teacher; before I came to live here."

"Is the young man a Christian?" I inquired.

The answer was given falteringly, "Yes; I think so."

"Is he a Methodist?"

"No; but he will go anywhere that I go?"

"My dear girl," I said, "pray do not deceive yourself. Are you quite sure that William has come to Christ and received mercy?"

"No, dear —— ——," she answered; and, with streaming tears, added, "If I could be sure of this, my prospects would be bright."

Often afterwards I spoke to Lizzie of William, but she still declared he was anxious to be right —that she had great influence over him now, and when they were married she should have more. In vain I showed her the Word of God on the subject; in vain I warned her of the probable consequence of the step she was about to take; she persisted in believing that the Lord

would make her instrumental in saving William's soul. By-and-by came the last Sabbath at the Bible class; the farewells were spoken; many prayers went up for Lizzie; her determination was fixed.

In due time came the piece of wedding-cake, accompanied by an account of the ceremony. It was performed by a Wesleyan minister; it was sanctioned by the presence of many pious people; it was sanctified by reading of the Word of God and prayer, and Lizzie thought all these things constituted an auspicious beginning.

The next letter told me they were settled in their new home, near a large chapel in one of the London circuits. I knew one or two gentlemen in connection with that place of worship, so I wrote to one who was a leader, begging him to visit the young couple, and recommend them to suitable classes. His mission succeeded; Lizzie united with a few young people, met by a pious and devoted lady, and William promised to join my friend's class.

Things seemed to prosper. The young wife wrote me occasionally, and was always happy. In one letter she said:—"How do you think we spend our Sabbath afternoons? We have a Bible class—our landlady, William, and I. I am supposed to be the speaker, and I take one of your subjects. We read verse by verse, and then I tell them as nearly as I can what you said about

it. Sometimes they ask me questions, and that helps me wonderfully."

When they had been married eighteen months they came to see me, bringing their little one with them. They seemed united and happy, but when I spoke to the husband, I found he had not fully decided to be the Lord's; he acknowledged that he had no genuine religion, it was only profession, but he hoped some day to be converted. His dear wife was hopeful too; but, as I looked at her, I fancied there was some disappointment mingled with her hopes.

After this visit I heard nothing for a long time. At length I saw my friend the class leader, and inquired after my old pupil.

"Ah!" he said, "she is a gem of a woman, but she has made a grand mistake, and the Lord will chasten her for a while. *She did not marry in the Lord.* Her husband is getting weary of his heartless profession, and now he thinks it quite enough if he does not hinder her; she goes to chapel when she likes, and he will mind the children, but he does not care for quite so much religion."

My friend assured me that amidst all discouragements Lizzie persevered in the good way, and often said, "My heart is fixed; I love the Lord." But at the same time the longing desire for her husband's salvation, accompanied by the conviction that in the matter of her union she had

sinned against light, had worn her down so much, "that," added my friend, "I do not think you would now recognise her."

Poor Lizzie! will she ever regain her bright, happy look? God grant that her husband may speedily become converted. We can pray for this, and hope that the wife and mother may yet have reason to rejoice, though it be with trembling.

I should like here to record a case of a somewhat different character, but others would have such a distinct remembrance of the circumstances as to recognise the individuals at once if they read the history. The one of whom I could wish to write, firmly resolved, and kept to her resolution, to "marry in the Lord," although she suffered much on that account. But now she is happy in her husband and her family, and happy, above all, because they are going hand in hand to heaven.

CHAPTER XVI.

"PERPLEXED, BUT NOT IN DESPAIR."

MARY J—— was sent from the Sunday-school into the adult class in the month of May, 18—. She was at that time a tall, unformed girl of about fifteen years of age, careless and inattentive in the extreme; she would read a verse when it was required of her, but in a manner that proved she neither knew nor cared what the passage meant. Upon all topics alike she was indifferent; whatever interest other members of the class manifested, Mary remained apathetic. Months passed away, and there was no apparent change. She was very regular in attendance, but then we knew she was *compelled* to be so, and I had every reason to fear that had her *choice* been consulted, she would have been amongst those who seek only worldly pleasure on the holy Sabbath day. In this unpromising condition Mary remained until the March of the following year: then it was the Lord saved so many of our number, and the attention of Mary J—— was *arrested.*

One afternoon in thee nd of April, I had her and a few younger children from the school around me: we were at my own home, and conversation was perfectly free and unrestrained. Very little had Mary contributed to it, but one lively little girl said, "Let us each ask a question in turn, and Miss M—— will answer them."

"Oh, yes! yes!" they all exclaimed; "that will be nice."

"Well!" I said, "I have my bargain to make. When I have answered the questions put by you, I may be permitted to ask one for you to answer."

"O no!" was the reply, "you will ask hard questions."

I promised that my questions should suit their capacities, and showed that while I should have twelve questions to answer, each of them would have but one. They were satisfied, and the game began briskly; questions of all kinds were propounded, and but few of them required much skill to answer. At length it came to Mary's turn. There was a pause, then in a very nervous manner she put her query.

"Dear teacher, should not you be glad *if all your class were converted this year?*" Judge my amazement! Imagine if you can my throbbing heart! A deep seriousness spread over each young face, and I replied, "The greatest joy I could know would indeed be to have *a saved class!* I long to see *all* brought to the Cross of Calvary!

I believe in the willingness of Jesus to save *now*; and to save *all* who come unto Him." Then looking at Mary, I added, "Now, my dear, for my question to you. *Will you come as a guilty sinner, and seek the Saviour's mercy?*"

"It is what I want to do," she said, "but I am afraid of being laughed at."

From that hour I felt a deep interest in the welfare of Mary J——. At times she would come to see me at home, and weep impetuously because she was so wicked; then for a time she would be heedless and obstinate, and tell me she did not want to be a Christian. She was just now apprenticed to the dressmaking and millinery business, and she made several undesirable acquaintances. Altogether things looked darker than ever, yet she kept her place in all our meetings, and her name still stood with others on my class book. Our ministers pleaded with her, faithfully warned her, and prayed with and for her; her young class-mates talked to her in vain; she was deaf to all entreaties, and went on in sin. Ah, but the girl was far from happy! She was evidently the subject of much agonizing conviction; it was painful to see her writhe under the preaching of the Word; but at length deliverance came. We were privileged to have tokens for good during one of our regular evening services. The cry of distress from burdened sinners was heard; special prayer was offered,

and penitents accepted the offered mercy of Christ. We praised God together, and then separated. As I walked home, I felt a hand slipped under my arm, and looking round, I saw it was M. J. I simply said, "Well, Mary?"

"Oh, Miss," she said, "let me tell you I am so happy!"

"Indeed, Mary! and what makes you so happy?"

"Oh, I have peace—peace with God!"

I was yet doubtful, and wishing to test her, asked, "How did you obtain this peace?"

"I can't tell! I didn't have *to do* anything. You have often told me to 'lay my sins on Jesus,' but I did not even have to do that, but it seemed to me that *He came and took them.* It is so sweet, so sweet to be forgiven!" After a few more inquiries I was constrained to believe that the gracious change had taken place, and I rejoiced with her, but "with trembling."

I watched her for many months, and saw a thorough change in her conduct, and gradually my confidence in the genuineness of the work as the work of the Spirit increased, and yet I feared she did not '*grow* in grace;' she was very slow to realise her privileges; but I continued to pray for her, and tried to be satisfied. More than two years passed, and Mary had finished her term of apprenticeship, and was going to spend a month with some relatives who lived in the great me-

tropolis. She hoped while there to get into a house of business. She came to bid me good-bye; my parting words were of *warning* as well as encouragement. We prayed together, and she left me with the promise that she would write during the month. After the first Sabbath I received a satisfactory communication, to which I replied; then I heard no more until she came home. The first Sabbath after her return she was in the Bible class, but sadly altered for the worse. I spoke to her quietly at the close of the meeting, and she answered boldly, "I only came to-day to tell you I am not coming any more. I like Sunday pleasuring, and I mean to walk about." I tried to reason with her, but in vain. Poor girl! as she triumphantly exclaimed, "No more Bible class for me!" she little thought in what a short time she would have given worlds to be able to join us.

The following Sabbath Mary's seat was vacant, and we gave up our usual lesson, and spent the hour in united prayer for her. That very evening I heard that she was seriously ill. Early the next day and following days I went to inquire for her, but was not allowed to see her until the Thursday. I was shocked at her appearance, but she declared she was getting better.

One day, when visiting her, I offered to read to her. "I can read for myself," she said; "I want you to talk." I did so, but Mary sat in an

easy chair, leaning forward with her face buried in her hands, so that I had no response even from her eyes. Again and again I paid the same discouraging visits, till at length a ray of hope cheered me. Her little Bible lay by her side. "Have you been reading?" I asked.

"What if I have?" she exclaimed, pettishly. "It is no proof I am going to die." Then in a more quiet manner she said, "I have a trouble on my mind; I am going to confess to you something that I have done so wicked."

I begged her to confess her sin to God, assuring her of His willingness to pardon for Christ's sake; but as she seemed anxious to relieve her mind I listened to her relation, and then knelt down and besought mercy. I pleaded the precious blood of Christ, and ventured to believe that forgiveness was granted. From that day I had no difficulty in getting Mary to listen to me; we were always left alone, and some interesting interviews are in my remembrance. One or two must suffice.

The Bible had been removed from Mary's side, and she was much excited. I offered to go for it, but she would not allow me, so I repeated the thirty-second Psalm: "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered."

"What does that mean?" she asked, quickly. "Covered? sin covered? Oh, tell me about it." I *explained* as simply as possible how the

iniquity of our sins was laid upon Jesus; how *He* and He only was *sinless;* how the Father accepted His sacrifice in our behalf, and by His stripes we are healed; in His precious blood we are cleansed, so that believing in Him we can sing—

"Covered is my unrighteousness,
Nor spot of guilt remains on me."

Most earnestly did Mary listen, and when I prayed, her deep *Amen* encouraged me.

Another day she said, "Some of the class have been to see me, and told me you closed the Bible lesson with some pretty verses: tell them to me, please."

I told her they were taken from a leaflet which I had in my pocket-book, and would read to her. The following words caused her to stop me.

"I have a peace, and 'tis calm as a river—
A peace which the friends of the world never knew;
My Saviour alone is its Author and Giver,
And oh! could I know it was given *to you!*

"For you I am praying! for you I am praying!
Yes, poor burdened sinner, I'm praying *for you;*
And soon shall I hear you rejoicing and saying,
'Your dear, loving Saviour is my Saviour too.'"

Mary started from her chair, and with dilated, fixed eyes, asked, "Do you believe *that?* do you?" Before I could reply she had taken me by the shoulder, and asked again, "Do you believe *your* Saviour will be *my* Saviour? do you? do *you?*"

Her urgency alarmed me, and I put her back in her seat, saying, "Dear Mary, let me think a minute!" And when I said thoughtfully, "Yes, I do!" she fell on her knees, exclaiming, "Lord Jesus, be my Saviour!" My visit that day was a lengthened one, and ere I left I had reason to believe that the guilty soul was reposing on the bosom of the guiltless Saviour. The poor girl's countenance was beaming with her new-found joy.

The excitement of that interview was too much for me, and when the next day the news reached me that Mary was much worse, I was unable to leave my room to go to her. The first day I was down stairs a messenger came to say Mary was dying, and asked for me. It was the Sabbath morning. All the members of the household but myself were at the house of God, so I closed the door and went to stand by the side of my young friend. The scene was painful in the extreme, and I must draw a veil over what I then beheld. Suffice it that the tempter was fearfully harassing her soul. I repeated: "God commendeth His love toward us in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us." A gleam of hope lighted up the wan countenance. "That's it!" she said, and turned as if to go to sleep.

In the evening I was summoned again. The power of speech was gone, but she signed to me to sit by her side, and then guided my hand to

her heart, which was beating wildly. The countenance was calm and peaceful, and she evidently knew and understood all that was said. She lingered until Thursday, but never spoke again. As the end drew near, we asked the Lord to give her power to intimate that her soul was resting on Jesus.

"Dear Mary, if your faith is grasping Jesus—if you can say, 'Christ died for me,'—try and raise your hand."

There was an evident attempt to do so, but the power was gone, and so she passed from among us. *We trust she is with Jesus*, but often regret that so much precious time was trifled away. The dying bed, which was a place of temptation, doubt, and distress, might have been "soft as downy pillows are."

Mary's illness and death were not without their influence on the members of the class, and in one case I believe conversion was the gracious result. How loudly did we seem to hear the call, "Be ye also ready;" and how desirable we felt it to be to have always "a good hope through grace."

CHAPTER XVII.

SICKNESS AND DEATH.

It was with a sad heart and trembling limbs that I entered the room where to all appearance Jane F—— was fast nearing the end of her earthly course. She had been for several years a scholar in our Sunday-school, and for eighteen months was in my own class. Her attendance was regular, her conduct steady and quiet, and her attention seemed always given to the subject on which we were conversing; but she never volunteered a remark, never asked a question, and never gave an answer unless called upon by name. To do this was a dangerous experiment, yet wishing to break the ice-bands that seemed to hold her, I sometimes ventured to try it.

Once only did I get Jane to visit me at my own house, and then it was when the class met to celebrate the anniversary of my birth. During the evening I took a seat by her side, and endeavoured to draw her into conversation. For some time my attempts failed, but at length she became more free and communicative. We

chatted on various topics until we came to reading.

"I am so fond of reading," said Jane. "I spend a great deal of time in reading."

"What do you read most?" I asked.

In a twinkling her countenance darkened, and the answer was given snappishly, "Not the Bible, and I don't mean to."

"Well, dear," I said, "I did not expect you read the Bible *most;* but I was desirous of knowing the sort of reading you enjoy, as I might sometimes lend you a book."

She laughed and looked down, and then said in a hard, dry tone, "Teacher, I read newspapers, *London Journals*, *Family Heralds*, and all ——"

She hesitated, and I finished the sentence by adding, "and all sorts of trash."

"Will you lend me a book?" she asked, almost impertinently.

"Yes," I replied, as cheerfully as I could, "if you will read it."

"I will, if it is not a memoir. I hate them. People are all so good in books, and I never see any of them in common life."

"If you are fond of tales I will lend you a tale," I replied, and when she left the house I put into her hands "The Successful Merchant."

The following Sabbath Jane was not in her *seat,* and after the class was over, I went to her *home* to make inquiries for her. Her father

opened the door, and told me she was every ill. I wished to see her, but he said, "Jane did not want any gloomy talk in her room, and no one was to go up."

I tried all my powers of persuasion, but in vain. The father dismissed me with the promise that if Jane had any desire to see me, he would send for me.

No message reached me until Wednesday morning, and then it was from the mother, saying, "Jane can only live a few hours. Will you come?"

It was then that with sadness and trembling I entered her chamber. Evidently, if I had a message for her, there was no time to be lost in its delivery. I sat down, and, feeling at a loss what to say, at once read the third chapter of St. John's Gospel.

"*I am not born again*," whispered Jane; "but I have never been bad; I have done my duty ——"

Here her father helped her out, telling how obedient and steady she was, how useful to her mother, how conscientious, &c., &c., until I wept with agitation. It was plainly no use to try to show her she was a sinner, so I spoke of Jesus crucified, and the way of salvation through Him, reiterating the "faithful saying, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

After a few words of prayer I rose to go, feeling a terrible consciousness that no light had *penetrated the* darkness of that mind; but even

then I once more repeated the words, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish." I was not permitted again to see her; but a few days after a neighbour of theirs came in and told me she had performed the last offices for Jane F. I tremblingly asked how she died, and she told me the last words she heard were—

"I AM NOT BORN AGAIN."

In the course of a week or two I called upon the bereaved parents, but was informed that my visits were not required, and indeed would not be received: "their daughter's last moments had been disturbed by the thoughts my conversation had suggested, and they determined their only other child should not be exposed to religious influences."

Such was the announcement I received. Reasoning was useless, and I returned home to pray for the poor deluded parents, and to devise means to reach the ear and heart of the daughter, who was the only one left to them.

Some few weeks after the occurrence of the painful circumstances just recorded, I received a note, requesting me, if possible, to visit a cottage about a mile from our town. The note was signed by a person unknown to me; but, as the request seemed urgent, at the first opportunity I set out. I wondered much why I was sent for, *thinking* it might be some ordinary case of sickness and distress, and that the message was sent

to me supposing me to be a sick visitor or district lady.

When I reached the cottage the door was opened by a young woman who looked in the last stage of consumption. She caught my hand, and pressing it to her pallid lips, exclaimed, "O teacher! how kind of you to come; I am so ill!"

I did not at once recall the features, but by-and-by I remembered it was Sarah Goodwin, an orphan girl who had been for some time in my class when I was but a junior teacher.

The poor girl had been living in service in London, and had, as she expressed it, a "manifest hard place;" "but, teacher," she added, "I have never changed my place, for I have *no home*, and it was hard to say whether I might get worse instead of better."

I asked about spiritual things, and heard there was nothing thought of religion in the family where she lived, but that a lady sometimes visited them who (she said) was a "follower of Spurgeon." This lady had spoken kindly to the poor orphan girl, had told her of a Saviour's willingness to save poor sinners, and the seed had dropped into prepared ground.

With her burden of sin, Sarah betook herself to the Saviour, and found peace through believing. "And," added the girl, as she finished her simple narration, "from the time I loved Jesus, I thought *of you. I* remembered one verse of a hymn you

taught me when I was a 'wee' child in the Sunday school:—

'But what is more than all beside,
The Bible tells me Jesus died;
This is its best, its chief intent,
To lead poor sinners to repent.'"

We had much conversation that day. I found Sarah had been in the Consumption Hospital, but, at the request of the only relative she had, she had come to C. "to die."

"It must be that, teacher," she said, "but I do not mind."

I repeated, "He that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

I promised to go again soon. I did not think Sarah would get better, but I did not expect she would go home as quickly as she did. When I went again she was much weaker, and could talk but little. Still her hope was bright.

After I had read to her from the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, she said—

"I used to have a troubled heart, *but not now.* Jesus said, 'Let not your heart be troubled;' *but it is He who will not let it be troubled.*"

When I prayed that the Lord would be pleased to abate "the swellings of Jordan," and give an easy passage through the deep, she said, cheerfully—

"The rougher the way,
The shorter the stay;
The tempests that rise
Shall gloriously hurry my soul to the skies."

On my next visit Sarah seemed brighter and slightly better. She was much interested in the account I gave her of my adult class.

"I wish I could come," she said; "but I shall know more than you soon."

"Ah," I said, "if you could come now and teach, I would willingly be the learner."

She looked earnestly at me for a moment, and then said, "Jesus said, 'Learn of me.'"

When I left, Sarah gave me a message for my young friends. "Tell your class that I know it is true that

> 'Religion only can supply
> Solid comfort when we die.'

Jesus is a living Saviour! a very, very precious Saviour!"

Once more I wended my way to the cottage, but ere I reached it the drawn blinds told the tale. I saw the aged relative, and learnt from her that the passing away was quiet and peaceful. For many hours she did not speak, and then, as her relative moistened the parched lips, Sarah lifted her head from the pillow, and in a clear voice said, "A SINNER SAVED," and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus.

I returned from the habitation repeating—

> "Mortals say a woman's dead,
> Angels sing a child is born."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MODE OF TEACHING.

[After having gone over the greater part of the manuscript material at his disposal, it occurred to the editor that some readers might ask, How did this teacher conduct her class? He found some partial answers to this inquiry in various places, but thinking it desirable that any who wished for it might have fuller information, he sent to his friend a number of questions concerning the plan she pursued. Before, however, giving the reply to those questions, it may be well to insert part of a much earlier communication received by the editor, relating to the same subject.]

I am not an advocate for any set style of teaching. I think variety is charming, and while one succeeds in one style, another succeeds in a totally opposite style. Depend upon it, the first thing is to have a thorough acquaintance with your subject, and so be prepared for any strange questions that may be put.

I remember at one time, when I had a class

of girls about twelve years of age, I used to invite them to question me, and they did it too, sometimes starting subjects that some would have deemed very foreign to the lesson, but which to their minds seemed bound up in it. At first I used to feel ashamed that I could not reply to their numerous questions, and I almost made up my mind to change my mode; but by the grace of God I conquered the pride, and learned to say, "I do not know, but as it is an interesting question, I will find it out for you." After that I got on.

It has been suggested that Sunday-school teachers on reading my experiences might be disposed to ask a few questions relative to my mode of procedure when conducting a class.

How do you begin? Do you make the members read all round and then give explanations? Do you take the *Teachers' Magazine*, or the *Union Notes*, or the *Treasury*, and read their lessons? or do you read to your class what different commentators say on the subject? Do you make your own notes, and read them? or do you study the lesson so thoroughly that you have no need of notes? All these questions and more have been placed before me, and although some of them have been incidentally answered in the preceding narrative, I am willing to give what additional particulars I can.

We always commence with a hymn. Probably

there will be but few present when we begin, but while we sing the numbers increase, and when we kneel for prayer all but one or two will have arrived.

My method varies. If our subject embraces a chapter, or many verses of a chapter, we read verse by verse. As may be supposed, I generally have some who are so nervous and timid that they are afraid to hear their own voices; but as the reading is not the object for which we assemble, this signifies but little, and is speedily understood by the other members, so that the verse is taken up and there is nothing to attract attention to the defaulter. I deem this of the utmost importance, in order to insure the personal comfort of the young folks, and make them feel easy in their seats. Sometimes our lesson may embrace only two or three verses, and then I select some one and ask her if she will kindly read them.

Generally the subject of the lesson is known beforehand; I prefer that it should be. I never take any one's notes with me to read in the class. Of course I study my lesson with all the helps at my command, and as I do so I make my own notes, but I do not read them; until my heavy affliction I did not even take them with me. Now, however, I cannot trust my memory, and am compelled to have my memoranda in my Bible for occasional reference.

Sometimes we go at once to the subject, sometimes I make a few introductory remarks. If the lesson is one of a series, I recapitulate the chief points of the previous lessons. This has a double advantage: it refreshes the memory of those who were present, while those who were not present are able to obtain a general idea of what has been already advanced.

During the time I have had an adult class, many changes have taken place, and the class has assumed a somewhat different character at different periods. The character of my lessons has varied accordingly, in some degree. But, on the whole, my plan has been pretty much the same. As I am specially requested to give an outline of one of our lessons, I will record as much as I can of a

Lesson on the First Psalm.

On Sunday, August —, 18—, we commenced the afternoon by singing the 89th Hymn. By the time we had finished the room was tolerably full, and we had prayer. Then I announced that the portion selected for our consideration was the First Psalm.

I remarked that the Book of Psalms was *the* favourite book in the Bible; that there were compositions there suited for all persons in all circumstances; that children loved to learn them, the aged loved to hear them, the suffering

found solace in their sweet and soothing truths; the light-hearted and happy could revel in the beauty of the songs of joy; and even the unconverted, and those who seldom cared for God's Word in any form, had been known to approve of "a short Psalm."

We then spoke of the composers—Moses, Job, Asaph, but chiefly David, the sweet singer of Israel; and I mentioned that this Psalm was attributed by some to David and by others to Ezra.

I then asked them to take particular notice that the teaching of the whole Psalm would be that *Character is all-important: upon what we are in the present, our future depends.*

With this idea in their minds, I should most likely request A. B. to read the first three verses and C. D. the last three.

Taking the first part as it stood, I mentioned the fact that "Blessed" is in the plural in the original, and that no English word fully expresses all the good that would result to the man whose character is described.

Concerning the character, the qualities given are *negative and graduating.* 1*st*, Walketh not; 2*nd*, Standeth not; 3*rd*, Sitteth not. Here would follow a few questions and remarks upon each degree.

From thence we passed on to the *Implied Truths.* "Walketh not in the counsels of the ungodly."

First Implied Truth. *The ungodly take counsel together.* References: Psalm ii. 2; Luke xxii. 3-6; Acts ix. 23; xxiii. 12, 13. Although the ungodly might invite this man to their counsels (Prov. i. 11-14), yet he would not go, would not have their counsel; like Job, see chap. xxi. 16; xxii. 18. This man may need counsel, but he knows better than to walk in *their* counsel; it is rather his determination, "*Thou* shalt guide me with Thy counsel," &c.

The blessed man "standeth not in the way of sinners."

Second Implied Truth. *The wicked have a way of their own.*—See Isaiah liii. 6 (middle clause). It has various names, "way of transgressors," "way of the wicked," "way of man," &c., but the most emphatic is "his own way." This way would not suit a Christian; if brought near it, he will not stand in it, he is gone as soon as possible. See Psalms cxix. 63, and cxxxix. 21, 22.

Then the blessed man "sitteth not in the seat of the scornful."

Third Implied Truth. *There are scorners in the world, people who despise God and His Word; yea, those who make it their business, who assemble to do it.* Illustrate by such as Voltaire, Paine, &c., &c. It is the last place in which you would look for a good man. He would be like David—see Psalm xxvi. 5; or like Jeremiah — see xv. 17. Why would not the good man be found there?

Because (ver. 2) he delights in the very things the ungodly despise. What we love most occupies our thoughts most, so the good man "meditates on the law of the Lord." Refer to second part of Psa. cxix.; Deut. xvii. 18-20; and Josh. xii. 8.

After these things we took the *Figure* in verse third. The blessed man is "like a tree" (see Jeremiah xvii. 7, 8), "a tree *planted;*" there is *stability* about his character, you know where to look for him; and being planted, he *flourishes*, his heart is fixed. Then again, he is planted in a *fruitful place*, "by the rivers of water." Illustrate by a description of Canaan, Deut. viii. 7-11; and x. 12. Results, Fruitfulness and Usefulness.

Here we should most likely stop, leaving the contrast for the next Sabbath, and after singing the 530th Hymn, close with prayer.

It is impossible to put the lesson on paper just as it was given, because, of course, it was interspersed with questions, and answers were given and references read by members of the class. Occasionally, too, questions would be asked or remarks made by them, but the tendency has been to ask questions afterwards. I have tried to alter this, and induce greater freedom of speech during the lesson: it may be that in this respect other teachers would succeed *better* than I have done.

The lesson above recorded was given to a class of intelligent young women, most of whom were thoughtful, many of them decidedly Christian characters. As before intimated, my lessons may have varied to meet the necessities occasioned by the variations in the class.

Every teacher must have a style of her own; it would not answer to be a mere imitator. The remarks, too, must be suited to the capacity of the listeners.

When able to meet a class in the week, in addition to the Sunday one, my method there was rather different. We went through the "Life of Christ" on Mimpriss's plan, and afterwards took the "Travels of St. Paul," with the map of the Sunday-school Union. We had then much greater freedom of remark or inquiry on the part of the members, and many are the reminiscences of those days.

I do not think it would be difficult for any moderately-educated teacher to keep together and interest a class of the above description. It is most important, first, to be influenced by the constraining love of Christ, and then to be determined, through grace, to persevere in the good work in spite of all discouraging circumstances. As I have before said, and now say again, nothing will help you so much as remembering, "I am doing it for Jesus."

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCLUSION.

THE foregoing statements may be no more than many a Sabbath-school teacher could relate. After all, comparatively little has been accomplished, yet I am very thankful to have been permitted to do a little for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

In looking back for more than thirty years, I have been struck with the number of those who have been under spiritual teaching for longer or shorter periods, and have then been removed from our sight and influence, and we know not what their life has been, or is likely to be. Has the Word found an abiding place in some of these hearts? and when the Lord gathers His loved ones, will some of these greet us before the throne? Now and then it happens that, after years of absence and non-intercourse, I meet unexpectedly with a former scholar.

"You do not know me, ma'am," said a respectable young woman whom I casually met in a tradesman's shop.

"No," I replied, "I do not. Ought I to remember you?"

"I was in your Bible-class, ma'am, more than twenty years ago."

I inquired her name, but although it sounded familiarly, I could not at first recollect anything respecting the girl. She helped me, however.

"I left the Sunday-school," she said, "to go and live with an aunt who was a laundress. I stayed with her a good bit, and while I was there I did not forget the good things I learned from you. I always read my Bible, and went to chapel on Sundays. Then I went to be laundry-maid in a gentleman's family, and none of the other servants cared for religion, and I soon got like them. But I lived in the same family till I got married."

"Well," I said, "and what of your married life?"

"My husband is generally steady; we have three children, and the eldest goes to Sunday-school. We do not always go to church, but mostly."

I spoke a few words upon the necessity of a change of heart, and entreated her at once to seek to know more of the love of Jesus, who died on the cross for sinners, telling her that the only way of safety was through Him.

We had left the shop together, and as I held out my hand at parting, she pressed it to her

lips, saying, "Good-bye, teacher!" adding, with a smile, "It is so nice to call you that once more."

I have not again forgotten that young woman. She is one for whom I make special prayer.

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I had got rather more than a mile when a carriage drew up, and the driver asked me if I would like to ride. I saw it was a conveyance from one of the inns, so I accepted the offer, and rode comfortably to my destination. Upon tendering the driver a recompense for my accommodation, I was quite surprised by his decided refusal of it.

"God forbid, ma'am, that I should take anything from you. I couldn't and wouldn't. We owe you more than we can ever pay. You don't know me, but my name is W——; my two girls have been under your care in the Sunday-school. They have left now, and I dare say you think we have all forgotten you; but let me tell you your name is a household word, and I am proud to have been able to show you I remember you."

So saying, he mounted his box and drove off,

leaving me lost in wonder and praise. I rejoiced that it had been my privilege to sow good seed in that family, and found encouragement from God's promise, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psa. cxxvi. 6.)

Sometimes a long period has passed away in which the labour has seemed all in vain, when there has appeared to be nothing but continued discouragement, and then, very unexpectedly, something has come to my knowledge which has greatly cheered me. As another illustration of this, I may give a paragraph from a letter I received one morning:—

"Dear Miss——,—I hope you will never, never give up a class for young women; I don't know what would have become of me without that class. When you first met me one Sunday afternoon, and asked me to go and meet some young people of my own age, you don't know how wicked I was. I thought to myself, *Ah! you don't know me, or you wouldn't ask me;* but I went, thinking, as my companion had disappointed me, it would pass away the time. But I was surprised when I saw how many came, and how respectable they were, and I said to myself, says I, 'I shan't come again, I shall be looked down on.' But one and another came to me and shook hands, and hoped

to see me again; and next Sunday, thinks I to myself, I believe I'll go again. So I went, and stood outside till some one came up to me and said, 'I'm going into the Bible class; will you come?' and I didn't speak a word, but stepped in quick, for I was half ashamed of myself. But that day you will remember, dear teacher, my heart broke right out, and you said, 'Susan! Susan! what is the matter?'

"I said, 'Oh, my heart is broke for wickedness!' and I think I see you, as you looked at me, and said, 'Is that all, Susan? I will tell you of One who can speedily heal broken hearts,' and then you told me of Jesus. He is very precious to me now; and I go to a Bible class now, but it is to a lady who is a church lady, and has a class in her own house; but I often think of the first I went to, and therefore I say, *Never give up.*"

In thinking of what was the most successful period of our history, I can but remember the great encouragement I received from the manifest affection the members of the class had for each other. They were one; or, I should rather say, *we* were one. Truly, "if one member suffered, all the members suffered with it; and if one were honoured, all rejoiced with it." How quickly were the absentees inquired after, and how earnestly were the wanderers entreated to return!

There was no schism in this body, but the members had the same care one for another, and "needful to each other proved." The unconverted in the class were objects of the most tender solicitude, and it was very delightful in our monthly prayer-meeting to hear the earnest petitions put up for the unsaved ones. Many a heart has then been softened, and many a cheek wet with tears, and many a resolution has been made that the Lord Jesus should have the first place in affections which had hitherto been held *from Him*, though enthusiastically given *to us*.

In a few instances some who have been helped in their Christian course by their union with us in the Bible class have afterwards connected themselves with other sections of the Church. In these cases surrounding circumstances have generally been favourable to such a connection, and unfavourable to union with our own Church. Although always recommending Methodism, yet I could not urge young people to leave the Church of their parents and friends. In one case a dear girl wrote me, saying:—

"I know you will be disappointed to find that I am about to be proposed as a member of the Congregational Church; but, dear teacher, I could not see my way clear to unite with the Wesleyans. My early years were spent in the Congregational Sunday-school. My custom was

always to attend the services in company with my parents, and you know I have never given up my seat there. But while I acknowledge gratefully that, in your Bible class, I first learned to love Jesus, and care for His Word, and while I feel a warm affection for you and all with whom I have been associated, my decided preference is to unite with my friends in this matter. So well do I know your liberality, that I tell you this without one fear that you will discourage me, but rather do I hope that, in this important step, I may have your counsel and prayers."

Another once wrote me as follows :—

"I am very happy in the love of Jesus. I can indeed rejoice, and say the Lord hath washed my sins away. I am so thankful to you for all your kindness to me. The Lord will reward you for it. Give my love to all the class.

"There is no young women's Bible class here; indeed there are no Wesleyans, so I attend at the Bible Christian chapel, and the Lord is converting many souls. I do not find much difference, only the people are more lively than at C., and I rather like that."

What could I say in such cases? I could but rejoice that my old scholars were on the Lord's side.

Before closing these sketches, I must give a letter received from one of the members of the Bible class when I was too ill to be at our meeting, and had requested one of the young people to conduct it in my absence. The letter will show the affection and regard each had for the other.

"My Dear Teacher,—I write in the name of the class to wish you a happy New Year. We know you will be happy if you are made the means of winning many souls to Jesus. Oh that it may be the case this year! How much need there is for prayer when we look round and see how few comparatively love the Saviour. . . . I must tell you what a delightful class we had on Sunday; I enjoyed Miss —— very much. I confess I went very much cast down, and was thinking, as you were not there, I should not care for it much. But I must say I was quite cheered, and came home lifted up indeed with the blessed truths I had heard. The subject was, 'The Safety of the Christian's Pathway.' You were right in selecting her as your representative. . . If you say anything to her respecting the class, tell her that, as she was the means of cheering one soul, not to be weary in well doing, for in due season she shall reap if she faints not. . . . We had a short prayer-meeting, but very sweet. May the Lord speedily restore you to your loving band."

Much more might be written. Many other names come crowding on my memory; names of those who promised well, who, as young trees, were covered with blossoms, but alas! "frosts nipped them in the bud;" names of some who gained my love, but on whom I seemed to obtain no hold, over whom I acquired no influence. They left, and I have not been able to find out what has befallen them. Then I think of others whom I often meet, but who have apparently thrown off all care and are running headlong to destruction.

I have need, in reviewing the past, still to urge my former prayer: "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O my God; create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Then shall I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee."

"Toiling on in joy and sorrow,
Asking not for rest below;
Seeking only gems to glitter
On a crowned Redeemer's brow.

"Sowing seed amid my weeping,
Waiting for the harvest-morn;
When, mid strains of angel-music,
Shall the sheaves be homeward borne.

"Now, the working and the waiting,
Now the night-watch sad and lone;
Then the joy of rest unbroken,
Then the sunshine and the throne."

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